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MEMOIR

OF THE

O'CONOR FAMILY.

MEMOIR

OF

A CONTROVERSY

RESPECTING THE NAME BORNE BY

THE O'CONNORS OF BALLINTOBBER,

THE TITLE OF DON,

AND

THE LEGAL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FAMILY.

PREPARED AND PUBLISHED, WITH SOME EXPLANATORY NOTES,

BY

RODERIC O'CONOR, Esq.,

BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

Intended for the information of the O'Connor Family.

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INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS.

No subject can be less interesting to the general reader than the descent of a private family, or less in keeping with the sentiments of the present enlightened age, than the vain boastings of family pride. There is something so frivolous in such fictitious pretensions, they are so perfectly irreconcilable with the faintest glimmering of common sense, that they unavoidably excite either derision or disgust. There are, however, persons so miserably infected with this sort of family madness, that they imagine themselves entitled, in right of their ancestors, to an amount of reverential respect not over freely conceded to the most distinguished virtue, or to the greatest merit.—The late Mr. Mathew O'Conor, of Mount Druid, brother of the late Owen O'Connor, of Belanagare, appears to have been one of this infatuated class, and to have laboured under some such bewildering delusion when compiling pedigrees to sustain his vain boast that "the O'Conors, of Belanagare and of Mount Druid, were the only remains of the Ballintobber family."—(*Weld's Statistical Survey*

of the County of Roscommon, p. 382.) Mr. M. O'Conor was shrewd, calculating and unscrupulous, and, being anxious by any contrivance to re-varnish his neglected escutcheon, made the most of his very scanty and factitious materials. The assumption of a slightly different name, and a fictitious title, apparently severed his family from every other branch of the O'Connors of Ballintobber, and suggested to him his disgracefully disingenuous and mischievous manœuvres.

The late Charles O'Connor, the great historian of the fabulous period of Irish history, drew out several pedigrees for the different members of his family, which, being framed for partial purposes, necessarily omitted the other branches of the family. Some of those partial pedigrees came to the hands of Mr. M. O'Conor, who, artfully enough, put them forward as general pedigrees of the *O'Conor* family, calculating (not without reason,) that they might at a future time pass for, and be received as, such.[a] Thus the new name, the title of *Don*, and those insidiously prepared pedigrees, formed his entire stock of evidence, either to sustain his own descent or to calumniate the ancestry of his neighbours, with whose descent he was so well acquainted—*we had it from his*

[a] One of those pedigrees, dressed up in all the deceptive muffling of feigned antiquity, will be found in the appendix.

own lips. He certainly had an overweening propensity to exterminate ancient Irish families, and was ever searching out the period of their extinction—it was a curious mania. Thus he discovered that the *last* of the Plunkets, of Castleplunket, was a Dominican friar—so there was an end of them. That the *last* female of the House of Hapsburg erected a monument at Brussels to the memory of the *last* male of the race of O'Connor of Sligo.—(*Recollections of Switzerland, p.* 18–22.) And that the O'Donnells could not trace their pedigree for five generations, and were driven to deduce a fictitious descent from the infamous traitor, *Neal Garbh*, which he good-naturedly affected to deplore—(*Military Memoirs of the Irish Nation, p.* 159.) Such were the amiable motives which influenced him in his rambling researches and defamatory writings.

In relation to the new name, Martin A. O'Brennan, LL.D., one of the ablest Irish scholars of the present day, states that about the year 1790, the Belanagare family, to serve some whim, first spelled the name *O'Conor*. He also states that Owen, of Belanagare, took the *imaginary* title of Don, and that after his death Denis assumed it; and he adds that Alex. O'Connor Eccles is undoubtedly the heir-at-law of Sir Hugh O'Connor, and that every member of the family is equally a

Don, just as all the members of the M'Dermott Roe family are M'Dermotts Roe.—*(O'Brennan's Ancient Ireland and Milesian Chiefs, p.* 162-3.*)* This accords with the true origin of the appellation *Dhunne*, for all are equally descended from *Tirlock O'Connor Dhunne*, and with the statements of Charles O'Conor, D.D., and Mr. Mathew O'Conor, of Mount Druid, who were the brothers of the late Owen O'Connor, of Belanagare, hereinafter cited.

The ancient name was Connor; and when Brien Boiroihme, Supreme Monarch of Ireland, introduced the use of surnames, and ordained that they should be borne by each sept or clan, they assumed the name of some distinguished ancestor, to which they prefixed *Mac*, the son of, or *O*, the descendant of, such ancestor—*O* being synonymous with the French *de.* Thus, O'Connor signified the descendant of Connor, and O'Brien the descendant of Brien (Boiroihme.)

It is curious to observe with what superficial subtlety Mr. Arthur O'Conor endeavours to set up his own descent from the O'Connors of Ballintobber Castle, as free from all difficulty or doubt, by ingeniously assuming that the descent of the Corrasduna branch of the family is a mere question of their relationship with him!—although he can adduce no evidence in support of his own descent but those garbled and mutilated pedigrees, put forward

by his father with such palpable insincerity, and for such unworthy purposes. Thus, instead of suggesting any fair ground for questioning the descent of the Corrasduna branch of the family, he merely tells us that he *ever heard* they were no relations of his family, not reflecting that claiming relationship through an ancestor of some 300 years standing, is nearly as ludicrous as claiming relationship through Adam.

Some of the Corrasduna branch of the family adopted the modern spelling of the name O'Conor many years since, and were so named by the late estimable Denis O'Conor, of Cloonalis, in a correspondence still extant, and produced in the course of this controversy, to show how differently he viewed the question, and how little he participated in the disingenuous manœuvres of Mr. Mathew O'Conor, or in his exclusive doctrines. Other members of the family retained the old-fashioned name of O'Connor until they found that Mr. M. O'Conor sought on that account to sever them from their ancestors, and that his children were unceasingly pointing at the distinction between the new and the old name, and at the title of *Don*, as sustaining their own exclusive claim of descent from the ancient Kings of Connaught, when, in order to do away with the distinction, they adopted the new name. But those pugnacious

Princes had devoted too much attention to their spelling lessons to surrender their mysterious orthography without a struggle—they protested against the innovation—declared that they had heaps of pedigrees prepared by Charles O'Connor, the greatest historian, genealogist, antiquarian and orthographist of his day, in which there was no room for anybody but themselves; but as the *onus probandi* was not on them, they modestly expressed their fervent expectation that nobody would presume to adopt the name of the last Kings of Ireland, without first giving strict legal evidence of their descent for at least 300 years— at the same time most condescendingly intimating that when such evidence was produced, they would exhibit the known liberality of their "illustrious" and "patriotic" ancestors by allowing such persons the privilege of assuming the royal orthography.— There was but one mode of dealing with such intractable presumption, namely, to place it under the pressure and control of public opinion, for which purpose the following correspondence was commenced; they were required to set forth the ground of their extravagant assumptions, and lest they should decline doing so, facts were put forward which rendered such a course impracticable. In the course of the correspondence, Mr. A. O'Conor was constrained to admit that *O'Conor*

was a mere modern invention— a name first adopted by Charles O'Connor—and that Owen O'Connor could only claim the title of Don under the (extinct) Brehon law, which had *no law of inheritance* and acknowledged no titles in the Irish Chieftains—even his own father's writings might have taught him so much, for he tells us "the "Chieftains themselves preferred *certain descend-* "*able tenures* under the laws of England to their "*precarious* chieftainries under the Brehon law, "*not descendable to their immediate issue, but* "*subject to popular election.*"—(*History of the Irish Catholics, p.* 9.) So that the whole of Mr. Mathew O'Conor's genealogical manœuvres have been overturned by the lucid explanations of his son, Mr. A. O'Conor.

It remains in conclusion to explain why it is now deemed necessary to publish the following letters in their present more permanent form. They were only inserted in the *Roscommon Messenger* while Mr. M. O'Conor's misrepresentations were insidiously published in books of some historical authority, and have already misled many modern writers. It is, then, but just to collect and preserve these letters which contain the refutation of his offensive insinuations and slanderous writings, for the benefit of those who are interested in the subject, and not to allow them to

perish with the scattered fragments of a local newspaper, more especially as we are aware that they have already been misrepresented both as to their object and contents, with a tact and truthlessness which demands attention.

Such, then, is our reason for publishing this little Memoir, for the satisfaction of the numerous descendants of the O'Connors of Ballintobber Castle, whether they may belong to its single or double N branches. Should it contain anything unpleasant or offensive to Mr. O'Conor, of Mount Druid, or his brother, Mr. A. O'Conor, they have themselves to blame. They have been unprovoked aggressors, and calculating on the disingenuous manœuvres of their deceased father, they forced us to expose his conduct, and to discuss questions, which were rashly made, essential to our interests and justification, both by him and them.

Upper Leeson Street,
Dublin, 10*th January*, 1857.

LETTER I.

My Dear Sir,

As Mr. O'Conor, of Mount Druid, and his brother, Mr. Arthur O'Conor, have declared their belief that the O'Conors of Belanagare are the sole representatives of the ancient O'Connor family, I am reluctantly coerced by so extravagant an assumption to enter into a discussion which I should otherwise think exceedingly puerile and unnecessary, and I think I am in a position to show that, my ambitious friends are *not even the eldest branch of the O'Connor family*, and that the name "O'Conor" is a mere *modern invention*.

Sir Hugh O'Connor, of Ballintobber Castle, was born in the year 1541, and was the acknowledged heir and sole representative of the old Royal Family of Ireland. The genealogy of the family previous to his time might easily be made the subject of endless contention, doubt and uncertainty, but from his time there is no obscurity whatever,—the different branches of the family have their respective genealogies, which they have preserved with too much care to admit of any mystification on the subject—there is, in fact, *no conflicting evidence*.

The late Owen O'Connor, of Belanagare, who had peculiar means of gaining information on the remote and doubtful periods of the genealogy, and who was intimately acquainted with the several

branches of the family of his own time, placed a genealogy of the family on record, in the Office of the Ulster King of Arms, in the Castle of Dublin, in which he took no small pains to point out the several branches of the family, which were founded by the four sons of Sir Hugh O'Connor,—he not only gave their names in the regular order of their succession, but added the *residence* of each in the County of Roscommon—his object was manifestly to deduce his own genealogy from Charles O'Connor the third son of Sir Hugh O'Connor. Now let us see what his genealogy sets forth. He states that Sir Hugh O'Connor had four sons—

1. Calvach O'Connor, of Ballintobber,
2. Hugh Oge O'Connor, of Castlerea,
3. Charles O'Connor, of Belanagare,
4. Bryan Roe O'Connor, of Corrasduna.

He states that the issue of Calvach O'Connor became extinct. He states that Hugh Oge O'Connor, the second son of Sir Hugh, died in 1635, leaving Daniel O'Connor, his eldest son, who died in 1667, at Cloonalis, leaving one son, Andrew O'Connor, who, he states, became "O'Connor Don," and died 11th November, 1748, leaving his son Daniel O'Connor, of Cloonalis, whom he also calls "O'Connor Don," who died in 1762, leaving four sons and two daughters,—Dominick O'Connor Alexander O'Connor, Thomas O'Connor and Hugh O'Connor, and Jane and Elizabeth. He states that Dominick, his heir, took the title of Don, and that on his decease without issue his brother Alexander took the title of Don.

He further states that the four brothers and their sister Elizabeth died without issue, and that their sister *Jane* married William Eccles, Esq., but he did *not* state that she had a son, Daniel, a solicitor, who assumed the title of Don, and who indorsed his briefs with the name of *Eccles O'Connor Don.*

It is obvious from the statements of Owen O'Connor in his genealogy, which his descendants cannot gainsay, that Mrs. Eccles was the only *stock* of the *Castlerea or Cloonalis* branch of the O'Connor family. Her son Daniel died in 1839, leaving you, Sir, his eldest surviving son and heir-at-law, and you are the undoubted heir-at-law and real representative of Alexander O'Connor, the survivor of the four sons of Daniel O'Connor, and therefore the heir-at-law of Sir Hugh O'Connor, there being no issue of Calvach O'Connor, the eldest son of Sir Hugh.

Owen O'Connor further states that Charles O'Connor, the third son of Sir Hugh O'Connor, his ancestor, was succeeded by his sons, Owen and Charles successively, that Charles O'Connor, the survivor of them, left a son, Denis O'Connor, who died in 1750, leaving his son Charles O'Connor, "a learned and distinguished antiquary, who "devoted his attention to elucidating the history "of his country and unfolding the long-neglected "records of her people: and who, with indefati-"gable research and labour, collected the most "valuable information regarding the history and "antiquities of Ireland." He died in 1791, and

left an elder son, Denis O'Connor, the father of the said Owen O'Connor. He further states in his genealogy that the fourth son of Sir Hugh O'Connor was Bryan Roe O'Connor, of *Corrasduna*, but as he deduced his own pedigree from Charles O'Connor, the third son of Sir Hugh, he, of course, had no occasion to record the pedigree of the O'Connors of Corrasduna, which stands thus.

Bryan Roe O'Connor, of Corrasduna, left an only son Roger or Roderick O'Connor of Corrasduna, who left a son, Major Owen O'Connor, of Corrasduna, who had four sons :—

1. Roderic O'Connor, of Ballycaher, the ancestor of Patrick O'Connor, of Dundermott.

2. Thomas O'Connor, of Miltown, my grandfather.

3. Denis O'Connor, of Willsbrook, the ancestor of the Willsbrook family.

4. Bernard O'Connor, in holy orders.

I need not trouble you with a detail of the members of those three families, so well known in this county, but may add that Roderic O'Connor of Clareview, County Galway, the elder brother of Patrick O'Connor, of Dundermott, is now the heir-at-law and real representative of Byran O'Connor, of *Corrasduna*, the fourth son of Sir Hugh O'Connor.

Such being the state of the O'Connor family in this county, Owen O'Connor (who took the Cloonalis estate under the will of Dominick O'Connor of Cloonalis, *not by descent*) states in his genealogy, "that on the death of his kinsman,

Alexander O'Connor Don, in 1820, he succeeded to the title of O'Conor Don," as *head of the family.*

Now, I ask in the name of common sense, by what title did Owen O'Conor assume the dignity of "O'Conor Don," to the exclusion of the son of Alexander O'Connor's sister, *Mrs. Eccles*, his undoubted heir-at-law, and real representative—who would have taken the Estate of Cloonalis but for the will of Dominick O'Connor.

It is worthy of observation that Dominick O'Connor, of Cloonalis, by his unnatural will of August, 1789, devised the Cloonalis Estate to his brother Alexander O'Connor for life, with remainder to his first and other sons in tail male, and in default of such issue, in remainder to his brother, Thomas O'Connor (who died in the lifetime of Alexander O'Connor) in strict settlement, and in default of issue, in remainder to Denis O'Connor of Belanagare, the father of Owen O'Connor, for life, with remainder to his cousin Owen O'Connor, of Belanagare, in strict settlement—and in default of issue of the Belanagare family, in remainder *to his cousin, Denis O'Connor of Willsbrook*, with divers remainders over to the branches of the *Corrasduna family.* Is it to be supposed that Dominick O'Connor did not know his relatives?

I think, without contradicting the genealogy of Owen O'Connor, I have shown that the three branches of the O'Connor family, whose ancestors I find in that genealogy, *are still extant*, and that there is no pretence for saying that they are merged in the House of Belanagare, so that state-

ment of my ambitious friends must fall to the ground—*sic transit gloria mundi.*

It would be most unreasonable to add more to this already too long letter, I shall therefore conclude for the present by calling on Mr. O'Conor, of Mount Druid, and his brother, Mr. Arthur O'Conor, to disclose the ground of their alleged belief that the O'Conors of Belanagare are the sole surviving representatives of the ancient O'Connor family—and to state on what ground Owen O'Connor assumed the dignity of "O'Conor Don," for I confess I cannot see any pretext for his having done so.

I shall, in my next letter, discuss the question of the true orthography of the O'Connor *name*, and prove, by legal evidence of the most unquestionable character, that the other branches of the family spelled the name O'Connor, and that the name *O'Conor* was a *mere modern invention*, introduced by the Belanagare family.

I remain, My Dear Sir,

Your faithful kinsman,

RODERIC O'CONOR,

Milton, Tulsk.

To

Alexander O'Conor Eccles, Esq.

LETTER II.

My Dear Sir,

As I was obliged to curtail my letter of the 3rd instant, and to postpone my observations on the true orthography of the O'Connor *name*, I shall now proceed to show that the new name *O'Conor*, was introduced by the Belanagare branch of the family and was *a mere modern Invention.*

I have already shown that the Cloonalis O'Connors were descended from Hugh Oge O'Connor, the second son of Sir Hugh O'Connor, and became the eldest branch of the family. Dominick O'Connor Don, of Cloonalis, represented the Cloonalis family from the year 1769 to the time of his decease in the year 1795. He was a person of great erudition, and left a valuable collection of rare books, now in your possession, in each of which he wrote the words "*Ex libris* Dominick O'Connor Don"—and they furnish convincing evidence both of his erudition and literary taste.

It appears that Daniel O'Connor, the father of Dominick O'Connor Don, executed his bond to Thomas O'Connor of Miltown, my grandfather, in the sum of £2,000, in trust, to secure a portion for his daughter Elizabeth—that judgment was entered on the bond in the Court of Exchequer and certain proceedings taken thereon, and that a bill was filed by Dominick O'Connor Don against

Thomas O'Connor as such trustee, and Elizabeth O'Connor her sister, in relation to her claims, and that the matter was referred to the decision of "Charles O'Connor, of Belanagare, and William Irwin, of Leabeg, who accordingly made their award," dated September, 28th, 1779, by which they awarded a sum of £600, with interest, to Elizabeth O'Connor, to be secured to her as counsel might direct, and £50 to be paid, as costs —and they signed their names thereto CHARLES O'CONNOR and William Irwin, and the said award was witnessed by DENIS O'CONNOR and John Tyrrel.

It appears that, by a deed bearing date the 30th October, 1779, made between the said Dominick O'Connor of the one part, and Elizabeth O'Connor of the other part, after reciting the said award, the sum of £600 was secured to the said Elizabeth O'Connor, to which deed the parties signed their names DOMINICK O'CONNOR and ELIZABETH O'CONNOR and which deed was witnessed by Thomas M'Grath and Robert Young.

These proceedings and documents are of peculiar importance in discussing the present question, for we find Dominick O'Connor, who represented the Cloonalis family—Charles O'Connor, who represented the Belanagare family—Thomas O'Connor, of Miltown, and Denis O'Connor, of Willsbrook, whom Dominick O'Connor Don in his will named *his cousin*, all signing their names in the adjustment of a family transaction, and signing the name O'CONNOR and not O'CONOR.

I should also remind you that Dominick O'Connor Don signed his name to his will in 1789, and to the codicil annexed thereto in 1795, *Dominick O'Connor*—and that it was under his will, *not by descent*, that the Belanagare family took the Estate of Cloonalis, and took it from your father, who was the legal heir of Dominick O'Connor.

There is a tombstone in the churchyard of Kilkeevan, where the *O'Connors* of Cloonalis were interred, on which the *names* of all the descendants of Hugh Oge O'Connor (except Dominick O'Connor Don) are inscribed as follows:—

Daniel O'Connor, the son of Hugh Oge O'Connor.

Andrew O'Connor.

Daniel O'Connor Don, and

Alexander O'Connor Don.

Why was not Dominick O'Connor Don named on the tombstone?—because when Alexander O'Connor Don discovered that he had by his will left the Estate of Cloonalis to his distant relative and cut out his sister and her children, he would not suffer his remains to be interred with the rest of he family.

Now, Sir, is it not clearly proved that the O'Connors of Cloonalis and Sir Hugh O'Connor's family spelled their names "O'Connor" and not "O'Conor," and is not the *onus probandi* on my ambitious friends to show by what authority Owen O'Connor of Belanagare, who in 1820 assumed the name of "O'Conor Don," took upon himself to alter the name of the O'Connor family *throughout*

the whole range of his pedigree? [a]—That pedigree was prepared by an able lawyer, who well knew what inferences might, in after times, be drawn from the record he was framing, and I am happy to find that so early an investigation of the subject enables me to show that the new spelling is no test of the old family.

It is not easy to ascertain when, exactly, the Belanagare family altered their name from "O'Connor,' to "O'Conor," but I find that Denis O'Connor, the father of Charles O'Connor (the historian) executed a deed, bearing date the 13th October, 1720, by which he granted an annuity of £70 10s. to Charles Hawkes of Briarfield, out of the lands and mill of Belanagare, which deed is registered in the Registry office, Dublin, 27,491, No. 17,889, to the memorial of which he wrote his name "Dennis O'Connor"—he appears to have had a prepossession in favour of double N's.

There is also a memorial on record of the marriage articles executed on the marriage of Denis

[a] In Owen O'Connor's Genealogy, the name is certainly spelled *O'Connor*—but in the publication of the same pedigree in Burke's Landed Gentry (late Edition) it is spelled throughout *O'Conor*, and it was naturally supposed to be a tanscript of the family pedigree lodged with the Ulster King of Arms, but the investigation which, since this letter was written, became necessary, enables us to point to the distinction between the two pedigrees, and to exonerate Owen O'Connor from any charge of having framed his pedigree improperly for the mean purpose of excluding the numerous descendants of Sir Hugh O'Connor, whom he so well knew. We now know who made that disreputable attempt, and regret to think that he was capable of doing so.

O'Connor, the son of Charles O'Connor (the historian), with Catherine Browne, of Cloonfad, bearing date the 1st December 1760, to which Charles O'Connor and Denis O'Connor were both parties—the name is repeated no less than eleven times in the memorial, and is uniformly written "*O'Connor*" as the memorial was only executed for the purpose of registration by Martin Browne, one of the parties thereto, it does not appear how they wrote their names; it may, however, be fairly presumed that Charles O'Connor and Denis O'Connor signed their names as they are spelled in the memorial, until the contrary is shown by the production of the deed, which, of course, is forthcoming.

Thus it is fully proved that the four sons of Sir Hugh O'Connor spelt their names *O'Connor*, and I call on my ambitious friends to state in candour, and with that sincerity which becomes gentlemen in their position, when the curious name *O'Conor* was invented, and by whom?

I am informed, by an eminent Irish scholar, that the name *O'Conor*, with a circumflex over the N, which is the ancient mode of writing it, means O'Connor, the circumflex standing for the second N, and that ignorance of the Irish language might have induced the erroneous spelling of the name.

Such then being the genealogy and orthography of the O'Connor family, how should the descendants of Sir Hugh O'Connor deal with the innovation of the late Owen O'Conor? His genealogy has been published, in which the name

O'Conor has been adopted throughout, and given to the whole line of our ancestors. The prominent position which Owen O'Connor attained in the long struggle for Catholic emancipation, and the assumption of the title "O'Conor Don," have induced a prevailing notion that he really was the head of the family, and that the new spelling of the name is correct, and distinguishes the true descendants of Sir Hugh O'Connor from all other O'Connors. In many modern Historical Works the new spelling of the name has been adopted to such an extent, and the presumed distinction has gained so much notoriety by adventitious circumstances, that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to remove the impression, which gains additional strength every day. Under such circumstances, the simplest and easiest way to counteract its unjustifiable effects is to adopt the new name and do away with the distinction—the difference is trifling—*de minimis non curat lex.*

I therefore recommend the numerous descendants of Sir Hugh O'Connor now extant, to subscribe their names *O'Conor*—a course I shall in future adopt *for mere conformity sake*—and I think that you, Sir, who are the Heir-at-law and real Representative of Sir Hugh O'Connor, should set us the example.

I remain, My Dear Sir,
Your faithful kinsman,
RODERIC O'CONOR,
Milton, Tulsk.

To Alexander O'Conor Eccles, Esq.,
Roscommon.

LETTER III.

My Dear Sir,

The long and detailed account which I was necessarily obliged to give in my former letters of the three branches of the O'Connor family, and of their ancestors, precluded the possibility of my directing your attention to the application and conclusive nature of the evidence I adduced in support of my statements, and I therefore think it advisable to offer a few observations on the subject. First, with respect to the genealogy of the Corrasduna O'Connors—the proper evidence in cases of pedigree must consist of the statements, written or oral, of deceased members of the family, who may have been in a position to have known the truth of the facts they stated, and who were at the time *entirely free from all interest or bias on the subject.* Such are the conditions on which the statements of deceased members of a family can be received in evidence of pedigree as laid down by the judges in the Berkeley Peerage case.

Now, Owen O'Connor, of Corrasduna, had four sons—Roderic O'Connor, of Ballycaher, Thomas O'Connor, of Miltown, Denis O'Connor, of Willsbrook, and Bernard O'Connor, in holy orders—they were the cotemporaries and friends of Dominick O'Connor Don, of Cloonalis, and resided in his neighbourhood. It did not require any deep historical knowledge, or the aid of either an antiquary or a magician, to enable the sons of Major Owen O'Connor to ascertain who was their

grandfather. They had no interest, no bias, no conceivable object, to induce them to lead their children astray, and the undoubted reputation of the three families founded by them is, that Bryan O'Connor, one of the sons of Sir Hugh O'Connor, was the grandfather of Major Owen O'Connor.

Then, there is the important evidence of Dominick O'Connor Don, of Cloonalis, the true representative of Sir Hugh O'Connor, whose testimony is above all suspicion. In his will he says, "I bequeath £50 *to my cousin* Denis O'Connor, of Willsbrook." Again he devised the Cloonalis Estate to his cousin Denis O'Connor, of Belanagare, with remainder to his sons, Owen O'Connor, Mathew O'Connor, Denis O'Connor, and Roderic O'Connor, successively in strict settlement, and in failure of their issue *to his cousin Denis O'Connor, of Willsbrook*, in strict settlement, with other remainders over. We therefore have the direct testimony of Dominick O'Connor Don, the legal representative of Sir Hugh O'Connor, that Denis O'Connor, of Willsbrook, who was his cotemporary, and one of the sons of Major Owen O'Connor, of Corrasduna, was his cousin, and as such cousin he left him a legacy of £50, and the estate of Cloonalis in remainder, on failure of issue of his cousins of Belanagare.

Now, let me ask you, how could Denis O'Connor, of Willsbrook, be the cousin of Dominick O'Connor, unless Major Owen O'Connor was the grandson of Bryan O'Connor, the son of Sir Hugh O'Connor? Or will any man of common sense take it upon

himself to say that Dominick O'Connor did not know who Denis O'Connor was, to whom he gave the legacy of £50, and limited his estates *as his cousin.*

The statement of Owen O'Connor, his brother, or of any of his cotemporaries of the Belanagare family, could not be received in evidence, because it is probable that they had a strong bias and ambition to assume that the Belanagare family were the only surviving representatives of Sir Hugh O'Connor, and *that* would render their statements inadmissable in evidence on the question of the pedigree of the other branches of the family, but would they weigh a feather in the scale against the pure and direct testimony of Dominick O'Connor Don, which is plain affirmative evidence.

The real question is, which now is the eldest branch of the O'Connor family? Must not that branch be the eldest which is represented by the heir-at-law of Sir Hugh O'Connor, and have I not proved beyond all doubt that you, Sir, are the legal heir-at-law of Sir Hugh O'Connor?—What claim, then, can the Belanagare family have to being the eldest branch of the O'Connor family?

And lastly, what is the true orthography of the O'Connor family?—I have shown that the late Dominick O'Connor Don signed his name to his deeds and to his will, and to his codicil, in 1795, *O'Connor*—that he, enumerated his cousins of Belanagare in his will, and named them all O'Connors—not a single one of them is named *O'Conor* in that will under which they hold the Cloonalis

Estate. Then we find their name inscribed on the tombstone, in the church-yard of Kilkeevan, O'Connor—we find the Corrasduna branch of the family always writing their names O'Connor, and even the Belanagare branch, down to Denis O'Connor, the father of Owen, writing their names O'Connor.

I remain, My Dear Sir,
Your faithful kinsman,
RODERIC O'CONOR,
Milton, Tulsk.

To Alexander O'Conor Eccles, Esq.,
Roscommon.

[The reader will observe that in the foregoing letters there is not a single unfriendly or unkind expression, the only object of the writer was to stem a current of habitual slander.]

MR. ARTHUR O'CONOR'S REPLY TO THE FOREGOING LETTERS.

Sir,

I have seen in the *Roscommon Messenger Journals*, of the 3rd, 10th, and 17th instant, letters of yours on the O'Conor family, and I have abstained from answering them up to the present, in order to confine my reply to one letter without trespassing further upon the public. I feel that an apology is due to them from me, for at all obtruding family matters upon them, but I trust they will excuse me for answering an attack made by you on my family, when silence on my part might be construed into an admission of the many misstatements you have put forward, and of the unsound legal opinions which you have given in stating that the title of O'Conor Don belongs to a person, who inherits not a foot of the O'Conor estates, and who is of a different name and family. [b]

A very cursory review of the history of Ireland will show that every Sept had some distinguishing cognomen borne by their heads or chiefs. In the

[b] This is a very peculiarly cool observation coming from a gentleman who so well knows that the Estate of Cloonalis would have descended to Alexander O'Connor Eccles, as the nephew and heir of Dominick O'Connor Don, but for Dominick O'Connor's unnatural Will, by which he devised it to the Belanagare family, who were, (according to the statements of Charles O'Connor,) very remote kinsmen of his, and thus disinherited his only nephew.

O'Conor family there were several Septs, viz:—the O'Conor Don, the O'Conor Roe, and the O'Conors Sligo,[c] and their several territories are

[c] A very slight acquaintance with the history of Ireland is sufficient to expose the fallacy of this statement. The Chiefs of the Irish Tribes never bore any distinctive appellations, *as such Chiefs*,—O'Nial of Ulster, O'Donnell, of Tyrconnell, O'Ruarc, of Breffney, MacDermott, of Moylerg, O'Brien, of Thomond, and others only omitted their Christian name and bore no title whatever. When O'Nial of Ulster threw off the mask he so long wore with such consummate duplicity, and declared war against Queen Elizabeth, who created him Earl of Tyrone, he assumed, as he declared, the superior title of *The O'Nial*, and he did so to conciliate his Tribe, who treated English Titles as badges of slavery, and became disaffected towards him for having accepted one from the Queen. On the other hand, the different branches of the tribe retained their christian names, as Con O'Nial, and Owen O'Nial, who were distinguished warriors of the Tribe of O'Nial. This explanation is given in Abbe Mac Geoghegan's History of Ireland, and other works of the highest authority.

The names of *Dhunne* and *Ruadh* were never applied in the O'Connor family as titles of the heads or chiefs of Tribes, nothing can be more ridiculous than such an assumption. Charles O'Connor, D.D., the brother of Owen O'Connor of Belanagare, a learned Antiquary, and one of the ablest Irish historians of his day,—(author of "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," "History of the Stowe MSS." "Columbanus' Letters," and "Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Charles O'Connor of Belanagare,") states in his *Memoirs of Charles O'Connor*, that "Tirloch O'Connor succeeded to the throne of Connaught, A.D. 1346, but was opposed by his cousin, *another* Tirloch O'Connor, who was supported by MacDermott of Moylerg, and O'Rouarc of Breffney, and that the *Connaught Electors*, harrassed by their dissensions, divided the Government between them, naming one *Dhunne* (the Irish of brown) from the colour of his hair, and the other *Ruadh* (the Irish of red,) from the colour of his hair." This distinctly negatives Mr. A. O'Conor's unfounded assumption; Charles O'Conor also states that O'Connor Sligo took that appellation A.D. 1536, and was

distinctly laid down on the ancient maps of Ireland. By the Brehon Law the female line were not only debarred from inheriting title, but they were also excluded from the inheritance of land. Hence the title O'Conor Roe was borne in succession by the male line until their extinction, and it then dropped. The O'Conor Sligo was also borne by the male line until their extinction, and it was then dropped. The title of O'Conor Don was borne by Hugh O'Conor, of Ballintober Castle,

killed in 1581, and not a shadow of authority can be found in Irish history to confer on those appellations of Dhunne or Ruadh any historical existence or representative value.

Mr. Mathew O'Conor of Mount Druid, in the statement which he furnished, and prevailed on Mr. Weld to publish in his Statistical Survey of the County Roscommon, truly states that the descendants of Sir Hugh O'Connor, as well as Sir Hugh himself, relinquished the distinctive appellation of *Dhunne*, but that about the year 1750, Dominick O'Connor, the head of the Cloonalis family, assumed the appellation of *Don*, being a corruption of the Irish word *Dhunne*, giving it more importance, and sounding *like a Spanish title*. Thus Charles O'Conor, D.D., and Mathew O'Conor, of Mount Druid, have exposed the low origin and absurd renewal of the title of *Dhunne* in its new form of *Don*, and which, by suggesting a fictitious precedence in a junior branch of the family (of which Mr. A. O'Conor is an offshoot,) was, in all probability, the cause of all the genealogical misrepresentations and manœuvres of the late Mr. Mathew O'Conor in the latter end of his life, on which his children have placed such silly reliance. The successor of Tirloch O'Connor Dhunne (or the brown haired,) was Felim O'Connor *Geangach*, (or the crooked,) and his successor was Owen O'Connor *Caoch*, (or the blind,) and would any man in his senses say those nicknames, or any of them, were descendible titles only inheritable by heirs male, by the Brehon law, which has no law of inheritance, and inherited by chiefs who, it is notorious, were *elected*, and inherited nothing as such chiefs.

who compounded with Queen Elizabeth's Lord-Deputy, Sir John Perrot, for his Patrimonial Estates, and in the articles of Treaty between them signed on the occasion he is styled Sir Hugh O'Conor Don, Prince of the Plains of Connaught.[d] From his son Charles was descended in a direct line Owen O'Conor, of Belanagare, whom you accuse of having assumed the title of Don without being the head of the family.[e] And from his fourth son, Bryan, you claim descent, but which

[d] The Brehon Law is quite misunderstood by Mr. A. O'Conor. He seems ignorant of the fact that we had Irish Queens as well as Kings, and very distinguished ones too. Queen Meibh, daughter of the supreme monarch of Ireland, ascended the provincial Throne of Connaught *twice*, and governed the Province with acknowledged skill and judgment. It was her father built the palace of Rathcroghan, in the county of Roscommon, and gave it with the sovereignty of Connaught to Tinne, her husband, on whose death she ascended the throne. But in the name of wonder how could Owen C Conor sustain a claim to any title or property of any sort in 1820, under the abolished Brehon Law (?) which had no law of descent—the law of primogeniture is English law ! !

[e] This is mere statement. In all human probability Owen O'Connor was descended from Sir Hugh O'Connor; but it is quite evident that he was not in a position to give any legal proof of his descent, and only sustained the pedigree he lodged with the Ulster King of Arms by his certificate (annexed thereto,) that it was *true*, according to the best of his *belief*, and from which circumstance *alone* it has been designated *his certified genealogy* Questions have been raised as to his descent, but we prefer the tradition of his own family, certified by a gentleman of his high reputation, to any assertions of that nature. Were we to call on Mr. A. O'Conor to prove the marriages, births and other matters necessary to establish his descent, he would find very insurmountable difficulties in his way.

requires more proof than you have yet brought forward to establish, when you do not possess one foot of his estates, and when tradition is against you—anything you have stated is mere assertion without proof. [f]

[f] Charles O'Connor, D.D., the brother of Owen O'Connor, of Belanagare, in his already quoted *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Charles O'Connor of Belanagare*, was considered to have been too communicative about the other branches of the O'Connor family, and his interesting Memoirs were suppressed. We believe there is but one copy within the reach of the public, and it was fished out of a lake, and is preserved in the library of the Dublin Archæological Society, where we have read it. Dr. Charles O'Connor states that the lands of *Beagh* and *Cloonycarney* were devised by Sir Hugh O'Connor to his son, Bryan O'Connor. Now it appears from the book of Survey and distribution that those lands were forfeited in 1641, by Captain Bryan O'Connor, and were, on the 5th September, 1655, on the petition of Roger O'Connor, who claimed them *as the estates of his ancestors*, decreed at Athlone by the Commissioners appointed to hear and determine such claims, to Mary O'Connor during her life, with reversion to her son, Roger O'Connor and his heirs.—(This is Mary O'Connor, daughter of Hugh Mergagh O'Connor, of Castleruby, the wife of Bryan O'Connor.) And it further appears from the book of postings, that the said lands of *Beagh* and *Cloonycarney* were again forfeited by Roderick O'Connor, in 1688, and were sold at Chichester House, Dublin, on the 3rd of June, 1703, to Colonel Henry Sandford, in trust for James Walker, in whose charge they still remain in the Quit-rent office.

Could Mr. A. O'Conor be ignorant that those lands were so forfeited by Bryan O'Connor and by his son, and know so much about the other estates of Sir Hugh O'Connor.—I regret to think he was not, because in the *Military History of the Irish Nation*, by Mr. Mathew O'Conor, (his father,) published by his family after his death, he enumerates some of those families whose estates were thus sacrificed, and amongst them "the O'Connors of Roscommon." Now, the fact is, that not a single

In order to contradict your statement "that Owen O'Connor did not represent the head of the family when he assumed the title of O'Conor Don," I will *show* [h] that the two elder branches of Sir Hugh O'Conor Don's family had become extinct, and trace their estates.

Sir Hugh O'Conor had four sons—to Calvach (the eldest) he gave Ballintobber—to Hugh (the second) he gave Cloonalis—to Charles (the third) he gave Belanagare, and to Bryan, (the fourth)

acre of Sir Hugh O'Connor's estates came by descent to any of his present descendants. They were all forfeited, the descent broken, and new titles created and granted to various claimants, and the possession of any portion of them, under such circumstances, affords no sufficient evidence of descent. It would prove too much, for it would prove several families to be his descendants who could not possibly be so.

As to Mr. A. O'Conor's assertion that tradition is against the other branches of the family, the assertion is made in ignorance of the meaning of tradition—and he seems to think he can make a tradition by saying, "he ever heard so." It lay on him to prove that tradition, and he had not a scintilla of evidence on the subject. Mr. A. O'Conor acted with the most unscrupulous disregard of his own character in making such a statement without any evidence to sustain it. Tradition must be proved by its own legitimate evidence and not by random assertions of hearsay, not even deserving of credence, and coming from a red-hot partisan. The whole of Mr. A. O'Conor's fruitless efforts to traduce the other branches of the O'Connor family are clearly traceable to the genealogical manœuvres of the late Mathew O'Conor, with which, of course, his children were well acquainted, and on which they unfortunately placed too much reliance.

[h] This word is improperly used—it should be *state*. Mr. A. O'Conor does not adduce any evidence, but mere assertions; he *shows* nothing but his anxiety to make out his descent, which never has been proved, and of which he has no evidence.

he gave *Beagh* and *Cloonycarney*. Calvagh had two sons, Hugh aud Charles—Hugh inherited the estate of Ballintobber, and resumed the title of O'Conor Don.[i] He made a will, leaving the estate to his son Hugh, and to his heirs male, in failure of such issue to his brother Charles, and his heirs male, and in failure of them to the O'Conors, of Cloonalis, the representatives of the second son of Sir Hugh O'Conor Don, and their heirs male, and in failure of such issue to them, to the O'Conors, of Belanagare, (the representatives of the third son of Sir Hugh O'Conor Don), and their heirs male.[j] His Son Hugh having died without issue, the estate came to his brother Charles, who, being of weak mind, was prevailed upon to make a will in favour of a female relative, and to leave her the estate, contrary to the en-

[i] This contradicts Mr. Mathew O'Conor's assertions, who alleges, in the statement he furnished for Mr. Weld's book, that Sir Hugh O'Connor relinquished the title of *Dhunne*, and accepted a knighthood from Sir John Perrot, and that his descendants also relinquished it, until 1750, when Dominick O'Connor, of Cloonalis assumed the title of *Don*, which was a corruption of *Dhunne*,—which of these contradictory statements are we to receive as correct? The son contradicts his father.

[j] It is highly probable that this will contains a devise also to the O'Connors of Corrasduna, (the representatives of the fourth son of Sir Hugh O'Connor,) but it would be too much to expect such a statement from Mr. A. O'Conor. It is curious to see the title "Don" applied to Sir Hugh, who was dead before it was *invented* by Dominick O'Connor, of Cloonaliss, and how Mr. A. O'Conor spells Sir Hugh's name, though he admits it was Charles O'Connor who *invented* the modern name *O'Conor* late in his life. Mr. A. O'Conor has the happy knack of furnishing evidence to overturn his own statements.

tailments of his brother's will.[k]—Legal proceedings were instituted by the Cloonalis family, for the recovery of the estate, and those who had obtained an illegal possession of it, under the will of Charles, knowing that their title was bad, and fearing their inability to retain it, they sold it for a mere trifle, to the Hartland family, whose influence (as Protestants) it was expected would be an insurmountable obstacle to the rightful owners (who were Catholics) in asserting their rights in those days. Their calculations turned out but too well founded, and the property of Ballintobber was thus wrested from the O'Conor family. Hugh O'Conor, of Cloonalis, the second son of Sir Hugh O'Conor Don, was the Commissioner for the Province of Connaught, in the Council of Kilkenny, in the year 1642, and died in 1655. On failure of male issue in the Ballintobber branch of the family, his grandson, Andrew O'Conor, of Cloonalis, assumed the title of *Don* [l] which his descendants bore until they also became extinct, on the death of Alexander O'Conor Don, in or about 1820. [m]

[k] Who was this female relative? We suspect that there is some reason for not giving her name.

[l] This again contradicts Mr. Mathew O'Conor's statement—(*See note* [i].)

[m] This is not so; his descendants did not become *extinct.* Alexander O'Connor Don left a nephew, the son of his sister Jane, who assumed the title of *Don,* and retained it during his life; and his son, Alexander O'Connor Eccles (who has not assumed the title of Don,) is now the real representative and heir-at-law of the Cloonalis family; and presents, according to

By the will of his brother Dominick O'Connor Don, (which you quote), the estate of Cloonalis was left in case of failure of issue male to Alexander O'Connor, and Thomas O'Connor, (the last of that branch of the family), to the O'Connors, of Belanagare, the representatives of the third son of Sir Hugh O'Conor Don, and such failure having taken place, Owen O'Conor, of Belanagare, became entitled to the estate. He was the head of Sir Hugh O'Conor Don's descendants, and in him was vested all the remains of Sir Hugh O'Conor's estates. In assuming the title of O'Conor Don he acted only as all his ancestors had done,[n] and Mr. Eccles, whom you assert to

Mr. A. O'Conor's legal theories, the singular phenomenon of *the heir-at-law of an extinct family*. Dominick O'Connor, who, Mr. Mathew O'Conor says, was the inventor of the title *Don*, had a curious notion of its transmissible qualities, for in his will there is *a bequest to his dearly beloved wife Catherine O'Connor Don*.

[n] This is not so; Tirloch O'Connor, who got the name of *Dhunne from the Connaught Electors*, to distinguish him from *Tirloch Ruadh*, was succeeded by Felim O'Connor *Geangach*, (or the Crooked,) who never assumed the name of *Dhunne;* he was succeeded by Owen O'Connor *Caoch* (or the Blind,) who never assumed the title of Dhunne, whose son, Carbery O'Connor, died at Ballintobber in 1526, leaving Dermott Miol Machaire O'Connor, the father of Sir Hugh O'Connor—none of those ever assumed the title of Dhunne, and they never heard of such a title as *Don*, which, according to Mr. Mathew O'Conor, (Mr. A. O'Conor's father,) was a corruption of Dhunne, invented in 1750, and they did not use the title in their public acts; yet, in the published pedigree in the late edition of the "*Landed Gentry*," the title of *Don* is given *to each of them*, by way of imparting to it a heritable quality, which from its origin, so clearly given by Dr. O'Conor and Mathew O'Conor, it is quite impossible to sustain; and Mr. Arthur O'Conor acted most unwisely in

have had a right, and who you say actually signed his briefs as Eccles O'Connor Don, had no more right to do so than he had to assume the title of Grand Visier, and it was equally absurd—the title could belong to none but to an *O'Conor*, of the race of O'Conor Don—and if he had even inherited the estate (not a foot of which he got), Mr. Eccles, being of a different name, could not nevertheless have assumed the title, which like the titles of O'Connor Roe, and O'Connor Sligo, must cease to exist with the last male descendant of the line.

Thus I hope I have satisfactorily answered your question, as to the grounds on which Owen O'Connor assumed the title of O'Conor Don, and I regret that the legal opinion you have given on the matter seems to be based on vindictive feelings, rather than on the principles of ancient or modern law. You also state in your letter, that Owen O'Connor, of Belanagare, in assuming the title of O'Conor Don, took upon himself to alter the name of the O'Connor family, throughout the whole

entering into a discussion with such recklessness, without any means of supporting his allegations, and seemingly relying on the dangerous supposition that everybody was as ignorant as himself on the subject.

In M'Connellan's Translation of the *Annals of the Four Masters*, A.D. 1189, it is related that O'Connor Maonmay, son of Roderick O'Connor, King of Connaught, was slain by Manus, son of Floinn O'Finachta, who was called *Crosach Donn* (or the brown-haired squinter,) this is the earliest Don we have met with on record. Those nick-names were very common amongst the ancient Irish. The colour of the hair, a squint, a hump, a stammer, or any peculiarity or defect usually suggested a distinctive appellation.

range of his certified pedigree,° prepared by an able lawyer, who knew well what inferences might in after times be drawn from the documents he was framing, and that the prominent position which Owen O'Conor Don attained in the long struggle for Catholic Emancipation, and the assumption of the title of O'Conor Don, induced the notion that the new spelling was correct, and distinguished the descendants of Sir Hugh O'Connor."

Your statement in this matter is perfectly incorrect, and without foundation; and in order to sustain my refutation of those unjust charges against my uncle—who cannot now answer you, but whose conduct through life, and whose character, is above your censure—I must recur to events which happened in Ireland before his time,

° This pedigree is called a *certified* pedigree from a certificate annexed to it by Owen O'Connor, in which he states that *he believes it to be true*—on which *alone* its authenticity rests. This pedigree has been both lodged in the office of the Ulster King of Arms, and published in the "*Landed Gentry*." In the former the name is properly spelled *O'Connor* down to, and even including the name of *Owen O'Connor*. In the published edition of it the name is most improperly spelt *O'Conor* throughout the whole pedigree. We are glad to find that this pedigree was taken from the pedigree prepared by Charles O'Connor, because it is in substance a fair pedigree; but we deeply regret that the pedigrees put forward by Mr. Mathew O'Conor, of Mount Druid, (one of which will be found in the appendix,) were not framed with the same conscientious adherence to well-known facts. Mr. A. O'Conor was very rash in compelling us to expose his father's disingenuous and unprincipled conduct, which we certainly would not unnecessarily do—he had redeeming qualities, none of which descended to Mr. A. O'Conor.

to throw light upon the subsequent events upon which you treat.

After the invasion of Ireland by the English, aided by the dissensions which then existed amongst the Irish chieftains, a long struggle was maintained, and for centuries Ireland was a prey to the horrors of intestine war of the worst description, where national and religious animosity was carried to the most extreme lengths—everything was done by their conquerors to destroy every vestige of nationality in the Irish, and the greatest pains and penalties were resorted to, in order to crush liberal pursuits and the exercise of their religion amongst them, as tending to sustain that nationality, hence, very great ignorance existed for a very long period amongst the Irish, and Irish history was almost buried in total obscurity, owing to the prevailing ignorance, and to the extreme danger of writing anything on that subject in those days. Charles O'Connor, of Belanagare, my great grandfather, was the first who had the ability and courage to undertake to rescue the records of Irish history from its sepulchral obscurity—his education was very closely attended to by a maternal uncle of his, who had himself been brought up amongst the Courts of Europe, and who, unable to discharge his duties as Catholic Bishop of Ireland, to which he had been appointed, (owing to the severity of the penal laws), applied himself to the education of his nephew, (Charles O'Connor), who, having a good natural

understanding, and a devoted attachment to his religion and country, made great progress, and being possessed of one of the largest and most valuable collections of materials for Irish history in the kingdom, he commenced his writing, which has since been greeted by almost every writer on Irish history who followed him. Guided by the ancient Irish, he restored the orthography of his family name, which had long been spelled according to the English fashion, which, in the depression that had so long previously existed, was paid little attention to, and gave them but little concern. His work, entitled "*Dissertations on the History of Ireland*," is extant, to which you can easily refer, and you will then find that he spells the name O'Conor all through with one N. [p]

Numerous autograph letters of his are in our possession, in which his name is so written, and which recited so many of the events of his day, that their publication would, in my opinion, afford a very good history of his time, and which I trust may ere long be given to the public. Hence, your statement, that Owen O'Connor changed the

[p] This is another singular delusion. Charles O'Connor wrote the name *O'Connor* throughout his *Dissertations*, which were published by subscription, A.D. 1753, and the names of several O'Connors in the long list of subscribers annexed thereto, including O'Connor Don, are all spelled in like manner—*O'Connor*. We succeeded in obtaining a copy of it, and found it a very interesting little work, though by no means of the importance ascribed to it by Mr. A. O'Conor. Charles O'Conor, D.D., was the clever man of the family.

orthography of his family name, is without foundation. [q]

It is nearly a century since Charles O'Connor made the alteration, and not one of his family have since written their name otherwise. Your statement that the pedigree, furnished by Owen O'Connor, had been prepared by an able lawyer, is equally unfounded—owing to the same course which crushed literary attainments amongst the native Irish, very great ignorance of their origin and pedigree also prevailed at that time, and Charles O'Connor, of Belanagare, was resorted to by many of the old Irish families for their pedigrees—many of which he gives in his work to which I have already alluded. The O'Connors, of Cloonalis, totally ignorant of the particulars of their pedigree, applied to him for information, and I have the original autograph pedigree which he drew out for them, together with the original autograph pedigree which he drew out for his own family. It was from that pedigree that Owen O'Conor drew the one he gave to the Ulster King of Arms, to which you allude. Charles O'Connor,

[q] Certainly not without foundation, for we find that he most pointedly and emphatically did so in the pedigree he gave to the Ulster King of Arms, in which he wrote his own name, *Owen O'Connor,* and his son's name *Denis O'Conor,* and then signed the certificate he annexed to it, *O'Conor Don.* This was a deliberate declaration that it was then *he* adopted the name *O'Conor;* but we are quite satisfied that neither Charles O'Connor nor Owen O'Connor changed their names with any unfair intention, it was mere caprice—we freely acquit them. They were incapable of such contemptible meanness.

who drew it, was a very simple-minded man, possessing neither the cunning nor the profession of a lawyer, which you accuse him of. I have now answered the several points of your letter, except your claim to be a descendant of Bryan O'Connor, (4th son of Sir Hugh O'Conor Don). It has been before stated that tradition is against you, for I have ever heard you were no connexion whatever of our family. [r]

I shall now come to the test of property;—Your grandfather, Thomas O'Connor, lived in the town of Castlerea, as is evinced by the Book of Conformity in the Rolls Office in Dublin, in which is entered that Thomas O'Connor and Mary his wife, conformed to the Protestant Faith in 1753; at that time I believe he had no property,[s] as Miltown, which you now possess, then belonged to Aylward John Dillon, but which, on his death, reverted to your grandfather, Thomas O'Connor, and to Terence O'Brien jointly, as being married to his

[r] This is what Mr. A. O'Conor erroneously supposes to constitute tradition—*what he ever heard!!* He could not show any, the smallest, scintilla of credible evidence to sustain his unwarrantable fabrication, (for it deserves a no less stigmatising character,) that *tradition* is against the *Corrasduna* branch of the O'Connor family, which had the distinct recognition both of the Cloonalis and Belanagare families.

[s] Why should he *believe* that a gentleman and his wife were living in Castlerea without having any property!! Is Mr. A. O'Conor aware that Denis O'Connor, the father of Charles O'Connor of Belanagare, was for several years living in a cabin at Knockmore, the estate of Mr. M'Dermott, of Alderfort, in a state of miserable destitution?

sisters Mary and Margaret Dillon. And it was by a division of his property by deed of partition, dated 13th July, 1759, that your grandfather then got 18A. 1R. 10P. of East Carrowgarry, and West Carrowgarry, otherwise Miltown, containing 280A. 2R. 2P., with the house and improvements thereon as his share; and Terence O'Brien got Dillon's Grove, East Slevin, and 18A. 3R. 11P. as his share, as is set out in the Registry Office, Book 275, in page 148.[t] Thus, you possess neither of two very essential evidences for establishing your claim, and your reference to Domk. O'Connor's will, I think equally weak to sustain you. He leaves his estate of Cloonalis successively to his brothers, Alexander and Thomas, and their heirs male; to his cousins of Belanagare, and their heirs male, to his cousin, Denis O'Connor, of Willsbrook, and to his heirs male, to Peter O'Connor, of Tomona, and his heirs male, to Barny O'Connor, of Ballycahir, and Thomas, his brother, and their heirs male, and lastly, to Roderic O'Connor, of Miltown, and Owen, his brother, and their heirs male, and then to his own right heirs. Peter O'Connor, of Tomona, to whom he entailed his

[t] The property of Miltown and Dillon's Grove were devised to the two sisters, and in the partition 18A. 3R. 12P. of Miltown were given with Dillon's Grove to Mr. O'Brien to make the division equal, which 18A. 3R 13P. were afterwards purchased by Roderick O'Connor, of Miltown. With a record of the partition before him, Mr. A. O'Connor could not state its contents correctly.

estate, was notoriously no relative whatever,[u] and claimed to belong to O'Connor Roe family, one the last of whom was governor of Civita Vetchia, and whose marble monument was sent from Italy to be placed at Ballinafad churchyard near Strokestown. If, as you state, the Ballycahir family the eldest, the Miltown family the second, and the Willsbrook above of the

[u] This is the most extravagant piece of presumption in the whole of Mr. A. O'Conor's disingenuous and nonsensical statement. Bryan O'Connor married Mary O'Connor of Castleruby, (already mentioned in a former note,) and their son Roderic, (whose commissions will be seen in the appendix hereto), left two of his daughters after him in Ireland when he went to France, one of whom married Redmond Fallon, of Ballina House, County Roscommon, and the other married Hugh O'Connor, of Castleruby, her own cousin, the ancestor of Peter O'Connor, of Toomona. Those families have always been warmly attached to each other as *relatives* and *friends*, but Mr. A. O'Conor, with his very circumscribed knowledge of the O'Connor family, wholly derived from partially framed pedigrees and his father's disgraceful manœuvres, seems bent on depriving the Corrasduna branch of Sir Hugh O'Connor's family of *all* its relations, perhaps from an envious feeling. Mr. A. O'Conor's absurd observations on Dominick O'Connor's will are quite below any serious notice, and only expose his recklessness and bad feeling. We have a letter, found amongst the papers of Denis O'Connor, of Willsbrook, written by Dr. O'Conor when he was Parish Priest of Castlerea, to Denis O'Connor, which is very characteristic of Dr. O'Conor, who, having taken too warm a part in the sad politics of those times, was afterwards obliged to give up his parish and go to England, where he became chaplain to the Marchioness of Buckingham, at Stowe, in which letter he recognizes Denis O'Connor *as his cousin and kinsman;* and the most curious part of the letter is, that it is directed by him to *Denis O'Conor, Esq., of Willsbrook*—it will be found in the appendix to this Memoir.

three is designated as a cousin, although, as you state, farther removal than the Miltown or Ballycahir families, and that yours is mentioned last in his will, and after persons of the same name, who were no connexion whatever—that although he gives £50 to Denis O'Connor of Willsbrook, (whom he calls his cousin), to buy mourning—he gave no such bequest to the Ballycahir or Miltown family, nor does he acknowledge them as cousins. I must also remark that Mr. Eccles, who you say was the legitimate heir to the title of O'Connor Don, was not even mentioned in that will; the causes that induced that will were that, from attachment and pride in his name, Dominick O'Connor intended his estate should go to a person of that name, although not a relative, in preference to any other, nor does even the expression in his will, denoting a relationship with the O'Connors of Willsbrook, bear you out in the greatest importance you attach to it, as there be many ways by which relationship might have existed besides the one you seek to establish—that of descent in the male line. You state that it did not require any deep historical knowledge, or the aid of an antiquary or a magician, to enable the sons of Major Owen O'Connor, of Corrasduna, to trace their descent; and in the short period of two generations, I suppose you can easily inform me who Bryan O'Connor, the fourth son of Sir Hugh O'Connor Don was married to, and give evidence of his marriage, &c., and who were the children, and where and how they lost their estates, and how you prove

he had children, and where and in what service Major Owen O'Connor, of Corrasduna, attained his rank.[v]

Miltown was Dillon's Grove property, and did not form any part of the O'Connor estate. Ballycahir was a lease, made by Sir George Caulfield, of Dunamon, for 31 years; and Corrasduna never belonged to the O'Connor family.[w]

[v] Mr. A. O'Conor's absurd questions and affected ignorance only demonstrate the ill-fated reliance he reposed in the misrepresentations and manœuvres of his father, he knows as well as any man living that Major O'Connor derived his title from a commission granted to him by James II. when a mere boy, (which was very usual in those times,) could the Belanagare or the Mount Druid families who devoted their time to compiling pedigrees, be ignorant of the gentleman whose daughter Hugh O'Connor of Belanagare, the brother of Charles O'Connor of Belanagare, married; and of their daughter, Bridget O'Connor, of Castlerea, who spent so much of her time with them, and was so kindly and generously treated by Mrs. O'Conor of Mount Druid, as a relative. And when Charles O'Conor, D.D., mentions in his suppressed *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Charles O'Connor*, that Major MacDermott of Emla, the father-in-law of Major Owen O'Connor, of Corrasduna, and the ancestor of the Springfield family, was the old soldier to whom Goldsmith alluded in his "*Deserted Village*," and states that he had the anecdote from Charles O'Connor, of Belanagare, who often saw Major MacDermott, and enjoyed his society so much that he repeatedly spoke of him, even in his last years, as a person whom he never could forget on account of the vivacity of his temper and the affecting emotions with which he could tell the history of his own adventures, and that his parts and the goodness of his heart procured him the friendship of Goldsmith. Oh, how little they knew of the O'Connors of Corrasduna!!!

[w] The pedigree prepared by Owen O'Connor, from the autograph draft of Charles O'Connor, names *Corrasduna* as the

Your reference to the tombstone on which you say that Dominick O'Connor's name was omitted, owing to his having been refused burial on account of his having cut off his sister, Jane Eccles, and her children, from inheriting the estate, being of recent date after his death, is no evidence whatever or anything you have put forward. In conclusion, permit me to express my great regret for the correspondence you have forced upon me. You accuse me of ambition—I cannot know on what grounds; I cannot look for anything I do not possess with regard to the O'Connor family—and if your accusation means that I desire to deny to others what I *manifestly* possess,[x] you do me a great injustice. I would admit, with the greatest plea-

residence of Bryan Roe O'Connor—what precise interest he had in the lands we cannot now say, but that interest continued until the death of Major Owen O'Connor, his grandson, who died there, and his son lived there after his death for some years.

[x] It is by no means *manifest* that Mr. A. O'Conor is really descended from Sir Hugh O'Connor,—his pedigree has not been proved in any shape or way, and rests entirely on modern statements, put forward by Charles O'Connor, Owen O'Connor, and Mathew O'Connor, who were all contemporaries. Charles O'Connor died in 1791, and as it is admitted that Dominick O'Connor received his information of those pedigrees from Charles O'Connor, and knew nothing of them himself, his having called the Belanagare family his cousins, affords no evidence in support of their claim. We do not desire to raise any question on the subject, but cannot sanction the assumption that Mr. A. O'Conor is more *manifestly* descended from Sir Hugh O'Connor than any of his very numerous descendants. If he means that he is so perfect a sample of the O'Connor family that he is manifestly a member of it, he certainly could not pay the family a worse compliment.

sure, the connexion of any person having just claims, and establishing them fairly, nor was it ever characteristic of any of our family to deny them. Owen O'Connor, whose character you impeach by your statement, was of all persons the least capable of the conspiracy with which you charge him. The position which he held in society, and to which you attribute the accomplishment of so mean an artifice, was devoted to a much nobler purpose—that of defending and upholding the rights of his oppressed fellow-countrymen. He was nobly sustained by them, and I have no doubt that with them his memory will stand proof against your charges. The debt of gratitude we owe to our ancestors, who have handed down to us an honoured name, both by their literature and their patriotism, and their moral and virtuous conduct, and still more by their unflinching conscientious adherence to the faith of their ancestors, unawed by the terrors of persecution, aggression, and confiscation of property, and allured not by the temptations of wealth, power and station, coerces us to guard that name with jealous care, both by attention to our own conduct, and by restricting the connexion to those who have just claims to it. Had you not professedly changed the orthography of your name on your son's marriage to signify a connexion with our family,[y] we of course

[y] Mr. Arthur O'Conor here most unjustifiably states that we claimed connexion with his family—we don't know whether his family are descended from Sir Hugh O'Connor or not. We know it has been strongly questioned, and we conceive that such must

should have taken no notice of it, but that being your declared object, I feel that you cannot properly adopt it without offering sufficient proofs to sustain your claim.

I remain, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

ARTHUR O'CONOR.

To Roderic O'Connor, Esq.

have been the reason that so many pedigrees have been put forward to sustain their claim, without any evidence to support them. Our claim is totally different, and whether they are or are not so descended makes no difference to us. Owen O'Connor assumed the title of *Don*, and adopted the new name *O'Conor*, in a fair and honourable manner, and did not claim to be the only remains of the Ballintobber family—there were too many old people of the family then living to render such a course practicable, even were he capable of such meanness. But Mr. Mathew O'Conor, finding the new name so well established (chiefly by his own contrivances,) and the assumption of the title of *Don* so successful, sought, by the insertion of misrepresentations in the works of respectable authors, to sever the Belanagare family from the numerous descendants of Sir Hugh O'Connor, and to represent that they were the only remains of the Ballintobber family. Of this we have discovered the most incontestible evidence, which is noticed in the introduction to this Memoir. We have no desire to say an unkind word of Mr. Mathew O'Conor, but we cannot avoid tracing out the origin of the slander which has been so unscrupulously propagated by his children, the foundation of which is to be found in his assertions and writings. Mr. A. O'Conor has, by the unmitigated insolence and personal character of his letter, altered the tone of this correspondence, and has himself to blame for the natural consequences of such ungentlemanlike conduct.

MR. R. O'CONOR'S REPLY TO THE FOREGOING.

My Dear Sir,—Before I enter upon the discussion of any of the multifarious topics of Mr. A. O'Conor's illogical, evasive, and malignant reply to my very simple demand, "that he should exculpate himself from a charge of reckless and malicious slander on the pedigree of three respectable families in this county," I must protest against his most disingenuous insinuation, that the question can be narrowed to a claim of relationship with *his* family;—the question is wholly different, and it behoves him, for his own character's sake, to sustain his defamatory allegations by convincing proofs, or to retrace his steps.

The Dundermott family, the Miltown family, and the Willsbrook family—descended as they are from three brothers—have uniformly and uninterruptedly deduced their descent from Bryan O'Connor of Ballintobber. The tradition of their families is unquestionable, and affords the best evidence that can be obtained on such a descent at the expiration of 300 years.

The Mount Druid family have taken it on themselves, without a particle of evidence to support the assertion, to impeach the genealogies of those three families; and Mr. A. O'Conor has submitted his inconclusive reasoning on the subject, in a manifesto, which exhibits more pertinacious confidence

and less ability—more evasive shuffling and less candour, than I have ever found in any document submitted to the public; it proves nothing but his unfair intentions, and his utter incapacity to sustain his assertions.

I shall now proceed to discuss the value of his arguments, and also the tone and malignity which they so plainly evince.

Mr. A. O'Conor's first position is, that the above-named families cannot be descended from Bryan O'Connor because they do not possess one foot of his estates. There is no question of the truth of the allegation, but to make it of any the least value in the discussion, Mr. A. O'Conor must go a few steps further and show that his estates passed into other branches of the family, or what became of them.

The eldest son of Bryan O'Connor by Mary, daughter of Hugh Mergagh O'Connor, of Castle-ruby, his wife, namely Colonel Roderick O'Connor, acquired more property by his marriage with Miss O'Shaughnessy, of Gort, his cousin german, than all the other branches of the family then possessed. He got by his marriage extensive estates in the counties of Roscommon and Galway. In whose possession are those estates now? Did any of them revert to the Belanagare or Cloonalis branches of the family?—No! Colonel Roderick O'Connor fought in defence of his country, and paid the sad penalty of his patriotism and valour; he passed over to France with his regiment in 1791. His properties were of course confiscated,—and that

puts Mr. A. O'Conor's silly argument quite out of the question. [z]

But I must confess that I do not believe that Mr. A. O'Conor is weak enough to place any reliance whatsoever in his own argument. He adopted it merely to gratify a malignant feeling, and to afford him a pretext for holding up my grandfather and grandmother as *apostates*, which he calculated would, by a certain class of readers, be considered a degrading and humiliating exposure, and for representing the property of their descendants as very trifling.

Now, what are the facts:—Thomas O'Connor, my grandfather, had very moderate means to commence with. He was an officer in the Irish Brigade in France, and attained the rank of Major in that service; he returned, not to obtain possession of his family estates, but to forward himself by honourable exertions. He married Miss Dillon, of Dillon's Grove, in this county; her brothers having died, the property devolved on their two sisters, Mrs. O'Connor and Mrs. O'Brien—and Mrs. O'Connor's share of the estate contains 640A. 2R. 37P. Ordnance Survey, besides which, Thomas O'Connor purchased 571A. 2R. 3P. in the county of Roscommon, and 835A. 30P. in the county of Galway, and which estates still remain in the family which

[z] See the account given of the forfeitures and sale of the lands of Beagh and Clooneycarney, note [f], page 33, which was discovered on record since this letter was written; and see the memorial of Colonel R. O'Connor to Louis XIV., in the appendix.

Mr. A. O'Conor has so unsuccessfully endeavoured to exhibit as descended from paupers and apostates. Let us apply Mr. A. O'Conor's test to his own family:—My grandfather was a second son, so was Mathew O'Conor, of Mount Druid—had he one acre of an estate of O'Connor property? Mount Druid is leasehold property purchased by him; Elphin house and premises are held from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and Mr. A. O'Conor has very little real property in this county, and none of what he calls an O'Conor estate. Now, was there any necessity for Mr. A. O'Conor to scramble through the title to my family residence to show that it was not (what nobody in his senses could suppose it to be), the residence of Bryan O'Connor 300 years ago.

As to Mr. A. O'Conor's unmeaning observations on the residence of Bryan O'Connor, at Corrasduna, and on the residence of Mr. O'Connor of Dundermott's ancestors at Ballycahir, it is observable that Owen O'Conor, in his genealogy, inserts Bryan O'Connor thus:—"*Bryan Roe O'Connor, of Corrasduna;*" and Dominick O'Connor Don, in his will, designates Ballycahir as the residence of Mr. O'Connor of Dundermott's father's family.

Now, as to Mr. A. O'Conor's strange reasoning in favour of the title of "Don," I shall only say that I found it necessary to impeach the genealogy of O'Conor Don, because that genealogy appeared to me to have been framed to sever numerous descendants of Sir Hugh O'Connor's from the ancient O'Connor family, by the adoption through-

out of the new and unauthorised name of "O'Conor."[a] Being under that necessity, I impeached it on three grounds:—1st. The improper suppression of the heir-at-law of Sir Hugh O'Conor, in aid of his own claims. 2nd. As it misrepresented the *name* of the family. 3rd. For its deduction of the title of Don as a heritable dignity. I have established, beyond a question, that *O'Conor* was not the name borne by the family; and I have Mr. A. Conor's plea of confession that Charles O'Connor, the historian, was the *first* of the family who spelled the name *O'Conor.*

Mr. A. O'Conor has put the title of Don upon grounds that prove beyond all question that it was *not* a heritable dignity. Mr. A. O'Conor says it was the title of the *Chieftain* of the sept or family; Mr. Hume tells us that the *chieftains* and *Tanists*, though drawn from the principal families, were *not* hereditary, but established by *election*, or, more properly speaking, *by force and violence*, and that their chief profit resulted from arbitrary *exactions.* Now, Mr. A. O'Conor has not shown that the title has any historical existence or *representative value*, but says that his uncle claimed the title according to the (extinct) law of Tanistry!!!

The Brehon law of descent could not co-exist with the English law; and it is sheer nonsense to talk of taking anything by the Brehon law in Ireland, or of excluding females in the law of

[a] In the published edition of this genealogy, the name "O'Conor" was adopted throughout, but not in the edition prepared by Owen O'Connor. (See note °, page 39.)

inheritance while Queen Victoria reigns over her Irish dominions, so that Mr. A. O'Conor's historical researches and legal views are alike inconclusive and unprofitable.

The long hatched scheme of the exclusive representation of the O'Connor family has come to its end, and is quite untenable.

There are numerous families descended from the ancient O'Connors who give themselves no trouble about genealogies or pedigrees, and who, by the new spelling of the *name*, were intended to be cut off in a wholesale manner. Now, for example, let us examine O'Conor Don's pedigree with that view:—It states, "Tirlough *O'Conor* governed Connaught for 21 years, and died in 1345, leaving, with *several younger sons*, *Hugh O'Conor*, king of Connaught. Hugh O'Conor died in 1356, leaving several sons." Now, without going farther, how are those numerous younger sons accounted for? Don't you think that some of them left families, and have existing representatives as well as the eldest sons?—and here their ancestor's names are so far tampered with that they are severed from the family! They are scattered over the country, giving themselves no trouble about the genealogists, tradition makers, or magicians, of the exclusive representation coterie. Is that a just or an honest mode of dealing with the genealogy of an ancient family? I cannot think so.[b]

[b] Though Charles O'Connor was the grandfather of Owen O'Connor, he was, singularly enough, his contemporary, having died in 1791, so that he may have suggested the change in the

Mr. A. O'Conor is too free in making assertions, but very slow in producing evidence. Mr. A. O'Conor mistakes his position—he is called upon to produce evidence, and he assumes that he is appealed to as judge; in the exuberance of his vanity he expresses a hope that I shall not write my name with one N without his sanction. I must deline consulting his hopes or wishes until he satifies me that he has something like evidence in support of his unwarrantable assertions, which I repudiate as altogether unfounded.

I have called on Mr. O'Conor of Mount Druid, and his brother, to state the grounds on which they ventured to calumniate the descendants of Bryan O'Connor. The ambiguous phraseology of Mr. A. O'Conor's letter, which assumed more the character of a *lampoon* than of a rational reply, renders it incumbent on me to demand an explanation, and call upon Mr. A. O'Conor either to define his defamatory insinuations against Mr. Bryan O'Connor, and to state his evidence in support of them, or to withdraw them. Mr. A. O'Conor knows that

spelling of the name, without giving the alteration any great antiquity, and it is to be regretted that nobody can explain why the alteration was made, and extended to those who never bore the name of *O'Conor*,—restoring a name to a family, which the family never bore, is rather an unintelligible operation, and is a ludicrous one to ascribe to Charles O'Connor; and yet it is precisely what Mr. A. O'Conor ascribed to his erudite great grandfather, for he says that he restored the orthography of the O'Conor name!

Mr. Brennan, the eminent Irish scholar, in his work recently published, treats the alteration as a mere freak of Charles O'Connor's, *without any foundation.*

he owes it to his own character to do so. I shall say no more on the subject for the present, but I shall return to it if necessary — I cannot leave matters as they now stand.

I am, my dear Sir

Your faithful kinsman,

RODERIC O'CONOR.

7th March, 1856.

To Alex. O'Conor Eccles, Esq.

LETTER II.—FROM MR. A. O'CONOR.

Elphin House, 14*th March*, 1855.

Dear Sir—I have seen a letter from Mr. Roderic O'Conor, of Miltown, in the last number of your Journal. His former letters and my reply, (which I consider unanswered) are before the public, and I leave the merits of both to their decision.

I am, dear sir, yours faithfully,

ARTHUR O'CONOR.

To Alex. O'Conor Eccles, Esq.

MR R. O CONOR'S FINAL REPLY

2nd July, 1855.

My Dear Sir—I very much regret that I am under the painful necessity of again adverting to Mr. Arthur O'Conor's letter of the 3rd March, which he, with such hasty indiscretion, published in two Roscommon newspapers, on the eve of our last spring assizes, and which contains such disingenuous and unscrupulous insinuations against the ancestors of so many respectable families in the county of Roscommon.

The grave character of those insinuations left us no alternative but an appeal to the only legally-constituted authority for the decision of such questions within our reach, namely, an appeal to the decision of the Ulster King of Arms, at the Castle of Dublin. We accordingly brought the subject before Sir J. Bernard Burke, and undertook the perplexing and difficult task of collecting evidence to refute aspersions of so stale and unexpected a nature. And it was not until the 11th of June, that we obtained, under the fire (or perhaps I should say smoke) of the enemy's guns, the following judicial decision from Sir J. Bernard Burke, under his seal of office:—

"Patrick O'Connor, of Dundermott, in the county of Roscommon, Esq., and Roderic O'Connor, of Miltown, also in the county of Roscommon, Esq., having submitted to me various documents

referential to their family, and being desirous of my opinion and decision as to their ancestors, I have minutely examined the said several documents, and have arrived at the conclusion that the families of Ballycahir (of which Mr. O'Connor of Dundermott, is a descendant,) of Miltown, and of Willsbrook, spring from three brothers—Roderic, Thomas, and Denis O'Connor, who are legitimately descended from a branch of that line of the great house of O'Connor or O'Conor, of which O'Conor Don is the representative.

"This judgment is formed after a most careful consideration of the strong family and traditional evidence[c] placed before me, corroborated by the

[c] In the laborious investigation before Sir Bernard Burke, no less than 10 statutory declarations were obtained from France and different parts of this country, proving the traditional accounts received from old members of the family, and facts within their knowledge. The marriage of one of Colonel O'Connor's daughters with the Marquess de Vienne; the death of her son at Miltown, and his burial at Ballintobber, County Roscommon; the transmission of articles of French manufacture by the daughter of Colonel O'Connor, from France to the Ballycahir family, and their preservation to the *present time* in the family; the marriage of one of Colonel O'Connor's daughters, who remained in Ireland, to Redmond Fallon, of Ballina House, County Roscommon; the manner in which Colonel O'Connor's son and two daughters, left in Ireland, were reared by fosterers named Kaveny, on his estate after he left Ireland—his residence at *Corrasduna,* and the removal of his tombstone from thence to Ballintobber—the inscription on it, and the declarations of his children that the Colonel was their grandfather, and lost his estates by leaving the country and entering the French service, and a number of other minor circumstances, which one would scarcely expect to be able to trace after so great a lapse of time.

transmission in the family of Ballycahir of the French commissions of the time of Louis XIV., by the MSS. of my predecessor, Sir William Betham, and by the devise in the will of Dominick O'Connor Don, bearing date 8th August, 1789, in which he styles Denis O'Connor, of Willsbrook, his cousin, and includes Barney O'Connor, of Ballycahir, and Roderick O'Connor, of Miltown, amongst those to whom he leaves the reversion of his property.

(Signed),

"J. BERNARD BURKE.

"Record Tower,

"Dublin Castle,

"11th June, 1855."

Mr. Arthur O'Conor, in his ill-concealed bigotry, made an unjustifiable attack on my grandfather for having conformed to the Protestant religion, and had the presumption, without a scintilla of evidence, to state that he was living in Castlerea without any visible means, and that he had no property but what he got by his marriage. Pray, what property had his father, Mr. Mathew O'Conor, before his marriage?—he was educated for a priest, became an attorney, and, like Mr. Arthur O'Conor, being a handsome man, he got the wife and the fortune—his first advance in life—*L'embarras de richesses* was not his complaint in those days; and as for his boasted adherence to the religion of his

forefathers, see what he says in "*Recollections of Switzerland,*" page 48, talking of Cologne—"Until "1793 the gloom of surtouts and cocked hats, the "foppery of silver shoe-buckles, the filth of long "beards, cowls, and sandals, overspread and saddened "the streets, squares, quays, and public walks. "In that year the fires of the French Revolution "spread to the borders of the Rhine, and involved "in promiscuous ruin the abodes of princes and "*priests*, of nobles and *monks*, alike regardless of "aristocratic claims founded on immemorial enjoy-"ment, and *sacerdotal rights deriving title from* "*alleged divine right and consecrated superstition*, "*all the trumpery of holy girdles and cowls were* "*consumed.*" In the third page he compares London to Rome, and tells us that "During the ages "of ignorance and barbarism, papal supremacy "impelled into the eternal city much of the riches "of the western countries of Europe, but the "greatness and glory of London may be traced, "not to *robbery* and *superstition*. but to the indus-"try of an enterprising people."

Verily, Mr. Arthur O'Conor is most unfortunate in the topics he selects for his defamatory purposes, in his vain struggle *per fas aut nefas* to elevate a junior branch of the family above its proper position, and to calumniate and extinguish everybody else, which he considers is a duty imposed on him by the literary accomplishments of his "illustrious and patriotic" ancestors. Mr. A. O'Conor has announced at the baptismal font a forthcoming work of his "illustrious" great

grandfather, Charles O'Connor, by Mr. Mathew O'Conor, on the Irish Brigade in France. On any matter relating to the O'Connor family, it must be received with great caution. There were many of the O'Connor family in the Irish Brigade—has he named them all?

It is far from my intention to emulate Mr. Arthur O'Conor in the substitution of scurrility for argument. I am not, like him, reduced to that humiliating extremity. Were I so disposed, he would have ample cause to regret his rashness in venturing to traduce those who are so immeasurably beyond his reach. Neither have I been the aggressor in this most ludicrously ridiculous correspondence—it was forced upon me by his inordinate vanity and folly. Finding that the new name *O'Conor* was most unwarrantably claimed as the *distinctive appellation* of the descendants of the ancient family, and finding that it was put forward *as such* in Mr. Weld's *Statistical Survey of the County of Roscommon* in 1832—in Mr. Hardiman's new edition of Roderic O'Flaherty's *West Connaught in* 1846[d]—in the translation of the

[d] In Mr. O'Flaherty's *West Connaught*, page 134, it is stated on the erroneously-assumed authority of the "illustrious" Charles O'Connor, that the name *O'Conor* was adopted A.D. 1030, by the then King of Connaught, and continued in the family *ever since*, thus giving the modern name O'Conor, 700 years of wholly unauthorized existence, and misrepresenting the name borne by the family for 700 years. But Charles O'Connor in his *Dissertations*, published in 1753, page 234, tells us that his Majesty of A.D. 1030, bore the old-fashioned name of O'Connor, and gives that name to his descendants throughout his *Disserta-*

Annals of the Four Masters—and in several other modern books published by the Archæological Society, I, without casting any imputation on any person, adopted the new spelling of the old name, to prevent my being spelled out of my just position amongst the descendants of a respectable ancestry,—when, to my unutterable astonishment, Mr. O'Conor, of Mount Druid, and his impetuous brother, Mr. Arthur O'Conor, had the temerity to question my right to do so, and, to throw ridicule on the subject, accused me of claiming relationship with them!!

I assure you, Sir, it never once occurred to me that I was claiming relationship with them or their family; nor can I think how it can serve or exalt me, or raise, or in any way add to my respectability to make such a claim. I am no genealogist, and attribute very little importance to such considerations, but I could not submit to such aggressive arrogance.

I have not denied to Mr. Arthur O'Conor the only position he can claim in the O'Conor family,

tions, without exception. Now, in both Weld's *Statistical Survey of Roscommon,* and Mr. Hardiman's *West Connaught,* we are told *that it was Mr. Mathew O'Conor, of Mount Druid, who obligingly furnished the particulars respecting the O'Conor family.* Mr. M. O'Conor treated the title of *Don* with unrestrained ridicule. See *Recollections of Switzerland,* page 130, where he sarcastically describes the dignity of *Don* and *Roe* as "distinctions founded on ancient barbarism, long since consigned to oblivion, and lately revived by plebeian pride, seeking distinction in names as substitutes for wealth and nobility, and endeavouring to cloak rags and poverty with the mantle of aristocracy."

in support of which neither he nor any of his family have offered a single particle of evidence beyond their own statements and the traditions of their family.[e] I have insisted, and do insist, that he cannot show the heir-at-law and real representative of Sir Hugh O'Connor in his branch of the family.

[e] The only published pedigrees of the O'Connor family emanated from Owen O'Conor and Mr. Mathew O'Conor, and neither of them adduced any evidence to sustain their statements, and were far from being communicative on any subject that did not suit their own especial purposes. Charles O'Connor's brother, Hugh, is not represented as having married, perhaps because he married Major Owen O'Connor, of Corrasduna's daughter. William Eccles is not represented as having had any children, though his son was the only nephew of Dominick O'Connor and Alexander O'Connor, of Cloonalis.

Charles O'Connor, in his account of the O'Connors, in his *Dissertations*, page 132, states that the late *Andrew O'Connor of Ballintobber*, in the County of Roscommon, was descended in 15 lineal generations from Cathal Crove Darg, the brother of Roderick O'Connor, the last King of Ireland. This is an extraordinary mistake. Andrew O'Connor resided at Cloonalis, and had nothing to do with *Ballintobber*, and this great genealogist takes no notice of the other sons of Sir Hugh O'Connor. It really looks as if he knew very little of the family, and did not belong to it—and of his descent no evidence has been adduced that we can discover.

Mr. O'Conor, of Mount Druid, and his brother, Mr. A. O'Conor, whose reckless impetuosity involved us in this humiliating controversy, having expressed their desire to put an end to it, we did everything in our power, consistent with self-respect, to obviate the necessity of saying an angry word on the subject; but Mr. A. O'Conor mistook his position, and with characteristic inconsistency, required, as a *sine qua non*, that we should say we adopted the new spelling of the family name *out of compliment to O'Connor Don*. This, of course, we could not do, having already assigned a more rational and less complimentary reason for having done so.

That the Cloonalis branch did not merge in the Belanagare family, and is still extant, and represented by you, Sir, as its legitimate heir, according to the law of the land—and that his uncle, Owen O'Connor, had no more right to assume the title of *Don* than he had to assume the title of Earl of Kingston. By the (extinct) law of tanistry it was elective—who elected him? By common law, if descendable, it went to the heir-at-law. Who was he on the death of Alexander O'Connor Don? If Mr. Arthur O Conor contests these statements, let him get the decision of Sir Bernard Burke on the subject; he was no way backward in trying the effect of his arguments with him in our concerns—let him now try his power of persuasion in his own case, and he will find Sir Bernard Burke very slow in sanctioning his groundless assumptions.

I remain, my dear Sir,

Your faithful kinsman,

RODERIC O'CONOR,

Milton, Tulsk.

To Alex. O'Conor Eccles, Esq.,

Roscommon.

APPENDIX.

THE curious pedigree of the O'Connors, of Ballintobber Castle, furnished by Mr. Mathew O'Conor, of Mount Druid, to Mr. Hardiman, and by him published in his edition of *Roderic O'Flaherty's West Connaught*, after he had previously got Mr. Weld to insert a note in his *Statistical Survey of Roscommon*, page 238, stating that "*the O'Conors of Belanagare and of Mount Druid, are the only remains of the Ballintobber family*"!!

No. 1.—Cathal Crove Darg *O'Conor* died in the Abbey of Knockmoy, A.D. 1224.

2.—Hugh, his son, succeeded to the Government of the Irish Province in Connaught.

3.—Roderic, Hugh's son.

[This is erroneous; Hugh was succeeded by Feidlim, his brother, who built the Abbeys of Roscommon and Tomona, and died in 1264. Hugh, his son, succeeded him, and died in 1274. —Leland, vol. 1, p. 208.]

4.—Eogan, Roderic's son, succeeded to the Government of the Irish of Connaught for three months, and was murdered in the Monastery of Fryers Preachers, in Roscommon, A.D. 1274.

5.—Hugh, Eogan's son, succeeded, Governor of the Irish of Connaught, and was killed by his own kindred, A.D. 1309, at Kill-an-Cloghan, in Breffney.

6.—Torloch, Hugh's son, obtained the Government of the Irish Province in Connaught, and was killed at Fiodh Doruda, in Munster, Eolus, A.D. 1345.

7.—Hugh, Torloch's son, obtained the Government of the Irish Province of his ancestors, was deposed A.D. 1350, and murdered in Baly-loch-Decar, by Donagh O'Kelly, the Chieftain of Hy-Many, A.D. 1356.

8.—Torloch Og, Hugh's son, obtained the provincial Government of his ancestors, and was killed in Clan-Conrey, A.D. 1406.

[No mention is made here of the division of the Government between him and his cousin, by the *electors*, who gave the names of *Dhunne* and *Ruadh* to the two cousins, according to Dr. O'Conor, in his suppressed work.]

9.—Feidlim Geangach, a minor, when his father died, succeeded in his advanced age to the patrimonial possessions of his father, and lived in the Castle of Ballintobber. He was killed in a skirmish with the O'Kelly's, of Hy-Many, 1474.

10.—Eogan Caoch, Feidlim's son, died chief of his name, at Ballintobber. Edania, the daughter of Daniel O'Conor of Sligo, his wife, died in 1476, and he died himself, A.D. 1485.

11.—Carbre, the son of Eogan Caoch and Edania, died in his Castle at Ballintobber, 1546. He married Dervorgilla, the daughter of Feidlim Finn O'Conor, his own kinsman.

12.—Dermott, the son of Carbre and Dervorgilla, succeeded to the estate of Ballintobber, married Dorothy, the daughter of Teig boy O'Conor Roe, and died at Ballintobber, A.D. ——; he lived in 1585.

13.—Hugh, the son of Dermott and Dorothy O'Conor, married Mary O'Ruarc, the daughter of Bryan na Murtna O'Ruarc, who was executed in London; he compounded with the Queen's Lord Deputy, Perrot, for his patrimonial estates, and died in his Castle of Ballintobber, A.D. 1627.

[Few persons reading this pedigree would recognise Sir Hugh O'Connor in number 13; no account is given of his family, all supposed to be extinct but the Belanagare and Mount Druid families—this is beautifully managed.]

14.—Cathal Og., otherwise Charles, the third son of Hugh and Mary O'Ruarc, obtained the Castle and estate of Belanagare from his father, on his intermarriage with Anne O'Molloy, the daughter of William O'Molloy, of Oghtertire, Esq.; he died on 9th February, 1634.

[This is erroneous; he got his share of the estates of Sir Hugh

O'Connor by his Will—perhaps this is a suggestion that there is some evidence of the marriage which does not exist. Mr. Mathew O'Conor had a morbid feeling about marriages—it was quite a professional dodge in pedigree making.]

15.—Cathal Og., or Charles, the second son of the aforesaid Cathal Og. and Anne O'Molloy, married Cecilia O'Flynn, the daughter of Fiacra O'Flynn, of Ballinlough, Esq., and the chief of his name. This latter Cathal Og., or Charles O'Connor, died at Ballintobber, A.D. 1690.

16.—Denis, the son of said Charles and Cecilia, married Mary O'Ruarc, the daughter of Colonel Tiernan O'Ruarc (the grand-nephew of the above-mentioned Bryan na Murtha, who forfeited.) He left issue of that marriage, viz., Charles, his eldest son, born in 1710; Daniel, born in 1721, and Hugh, born in 1729.

[He would not state for the world that Hugh married Catherine, daughter of Major Owen O'Connor, of Corrasduna. Oh, no—there were no such people! Corrasduna was not an O'Connor estate, but he adds]—

Charles, born 1710, was the venerable author of the *Dissertations on the History of Ireland*, and he also compiled the foregoing account of his own *Name* and *family;* he was the great-grandfather of the present Denis O'Conor Don, M.P., for the County Roscommon.

[The venerable author was in his 43rd year when he published his *Dissertations*, and then spelled his name *O'Connor*.]

Mr. Hardiman, in page 141, tells us the following extravagant story:—"During one of the late agrarian disturbances, a "deputation of the people waited on the late Mathew O'Conor, "uncle of the present O'Connor Don, and announced to him "that at a general meeting of the Barony, it was proposed and "*unanimously resolved*, that he should be proclaimed King of "Connaught; not anticipating any dissent on his part from this "wise resolve, the deputies respectfully requested him to appoint "a time for the performance of the ceremony, on the hill of "Carnfree. How the singular proposal was entertained may be "easily anticipated. Mr. O'Conor himself related this circum-"stance to the editor."

Mr. Mathew O'Connor had undoubtedly a desire to be

considered at least *one of the heads* of the family; he tells us in *Recollections of Switzerland*, page 132:—"In the saloon we wrote our names in the travellers' book. I waited till the rest of the company had finished, and then, as an Irish Chieftain, I wrote my name, adding *Hibernus Gentis suæ Caput*, being the oldest of the race, *and according to the Brehon custom, the head of the sept.*" (*a*)

MEMORIAL OF COLONEL RODERICK O'CONNOR TO LOUIS XIV.

AU ROY.

SIRE,—O'Connor, Capitaine dans la brigade d'officiérs dètachés du régiment Irelandais de Galmoy, représente trés humblement á votre majestè, qu'en 1688 il fut prisonier de guerre en Angleterre; en 1689 colonel en Irelande où il leva vingt deux compagnies d'infanterie; en 1691 passa á la tête d'un règiment d'infanterie en France oú il fut, en 1692, réduit á être capitaine dans le règiment de Charlemont, et á l'incorporation du dit régiment dans celui de Galmoy en 1698 capitaine rèformè, et au siége d'Aire lieutenant-colonel par la lettre de Monsieur le Marquis Goesbrian. Sous le bon plaisir de votre majesté, depuis vingt cinq ans qu'il fut fait colonel, il a servi sans discontinuer et sans avoir rien á se reprocher. Il se voit aujourd'hui capitaine réformè avec quarante cinq sous par jour pour toute appartenance, ayant étè traité á la dernière réforme de la susdite brigade comme les autres officiers qui la composent et qui auraient vu son chagrin; que le suppliant, en considération de sa naissance et du rang qu'il a eu dans le service, fut distinqué, dont il avait d'autant plus besoin qu'il est chargé d'une famille actuellement demeurante á Paris. Sire, de détail de ses prétentions est bien connu de Monsieur le Marquis de Goesbrian qui s'en est informè

(*a*) This claim is in accordance with the decision of James VI. The Blairs, of Blair, in the County of Ayr, in Scotland, claimed the chiefship of all the Blairs in the south and west of Scotland; but the Blairs of Balthyock disputed the honour with them. James VI., to whom the point was referred, determined that "the oldest man for the time being, of either family, should have the precedency."—*Sir Bernard Burke's Landed Gentry, new edition, Blair of Blair.*

et le suppliant peut dire sans vanité que, sans se faire un mérite d'être du nom et de la famille des derniérs rois Irlandais, son cas est autrement sí singulier, que les graces qu'il plairait á vôtre majestè de lui faire tireraient par aconsequence et ne pourraient servir d'exemple â personne, ce qui est á la connaisance de la Reyne d'Angleterre. Il vous supplie très humblement de lui donner le moyen de faire subsister sa famille en lui accordant la confirmation de la lettre de Monsiuer le Marquis de Goesbrian, ou le rang de capitaine d'infanterie, avee les mêmes appartenances á la suite de Paris qu'il a eues avant la réforme, une pension ou quelqu'autre grâce qui le puisse tirer de l'accablement il est, et il continuera. Sire, d'adresser ses voeux au ciel pour vôtre Majesté. Au Grand Roi.

[The foregoing address appears to have been written by Roger O'Connor, in 1714, as it states in the beginning that he was colonel in 1689, twenty-five years previous to this application being made.—See 3rd and 7th lines.]

A Paris, le Premier December, 1716.

Je vous addresse, Monsieur, l'ordre du Roi que son Altesse royale a jugé à propos de faire expèdier, pour vous donner le commandement de la 3rme brigade des officiers réformès du régiment Irelandais de Lee. Elle se promet de vos soins que vous la maintiondrez en bon état et dans une bonne discipline. Je suis tout â vous.

INNOLERS.

DEPAR DU ROI.

Sa Majestè ayant, en exécution de son ordonnance du dixhuit aoust dernier, fait composer quatre brigades des capitaines et des lieutenants rèformés qui êtaient dètenus à la suite du régiment d'infanterie Irlandaise de Lee, et jugeant du bien de son service de mettre á la tête de chacune des dites brigades un officier du mème régiment soat la capacité et la fridélité lui soient connues, sa Majesté, de l'avis de Monsieur le Duc d'Orlèans regént, a choisi le Sieur d'O'Connor, l'un des dits capitaines rèformes, pour commander la troisième des dites brigades, ordonner aux capitaines qui la composent ce qu'ils auront á faire pour la service de sa Majesté, tenir la main á ce qu'ils soient partout en bonne descipline, et gênêralement s'y employer á tout ce qu'il jugera nècessaire pour la maintenir en bon êtat, sa Majestè enjoignant

aux officiers de la dite brigade de reconnaître á l'avenir le dit Sieur d'O'Connor pour leur commandant et lui obeir en tout ce qu'il lêur ordonnera pour le service de sa Majesté sans y apporter aucune difficultê. L'intention de sa Majestê est aussí que les gouverneurs et lieutenants gênêraux de ses provinces ou ceux qui y commandant en leur absence, les gouverneurs de ses villes et places, les intendants de ses dites provinces, les inspecteurs gênêraux sur ses troupes, et les commissionnaires sur ses œuvres fassent reconnaître le dit Sieur d'O'Connor dans le dit commandement.

LOUIS.

Fait â Paris le XXVI. Novembre, 1716.

PHELYPEAUX.

Louis d'Orlêans, duc de'chartres, premier prince du sang, colonel gêneral de l'infanterie Francaise et êtrangère, vu le pui brevet.

Vous mandons á tous ceux qu'il appartiendra de faire reconnoître le Sieur d'O'Connor en qualitë de commandant de la 3me. brigade des officiers réforme, e détachés du régiment d'infanterie Irlandaise de Lee.

LOUIS D'ORLEANS.

Donne, â Paris le 10 April, 1722.

Par S. A. S. Montgarret.

The foregoing memorial, presented to Louis XIV., King of France, and commissions, are taken from the original documents remaining in the custody of Roderic O'Connor, Esq., East House, Galway, who is now the heir-at-law of Colonel O'Connor, whose commissions and numerous papers connected with his military services, have been handed down to him from his ancestors, who preserved them with scrupulous regard.

SEAL.

JAMES R.

James the Second, by the Grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, etc., to

our trustie and well-beloved Roger O'Connor, greeting:—We, reposing special trust and confidence in your loyaltie, courage and good conduct, doe by these presents constitute and appoint you to be Captain in the regiment of Charlemont. You are, therefore, to take the said companie into your care and charge, as Captain, and duly to exercise as well the officers and soldiers thereof in arms, and to do your utmost endeavour to keep them in good order and discipline. And we do hereby command them to be obedient to you, as their captain, and you to observe and follow such orders and directions as you shall from time to time obtain from us, or any your superior officers, according to the rules and discipline of war, and in pursuance of the trust and confidence we do hereby repose in you.

Given at our court at Quenonville, this 26th day of May, 1692, and in the 8th year of our reign.

By his Majesty's command,

P. SAYLE.

Sir,—The King has spoke to Mr. Hamilton, that your absence from the regiment, being upon their Majesties' account, may bring no prejudice to your pretensions. And his Majesty desires you may go to-morrow morning to Mr. Hamilton before he goes away, to inform him yourself of your case.—Sir, your most humble and obedient servant,

Sunday's night, 21st November. PERTH.

To Captain R. O'Connor.

John Dalton, in *King James's Army List*, recently published, names Colonel Roger O'Connor, whose regiment was broken up previous to 1688; and who, it appears from his Memorial to Louis XIV., on his subsequent appointment commanded 22 companies of Infantry, and afterwards passed over to France a the head of his regiment, in 1691. He was reduced to the rank of captain in France. In the Irish regiments that passed into the French service, the colonels were reduced to captains, and the captains to lieutenants.—*Histoire de L'Irelande par Mons. L'Abbé MacGeoghegan, Tom.* 3, *p.* 752. *O'Conor's Military Memoirs of the Irish Nation., p.* 194.

A Letter from Dr. Charles O'Conor, D.D., brother of Owen O'Connor, of Belanagare, to Denis O'Connor of Willsbrook.

My Dear Cousin,—I must trouble you with those lines to send you the enclosed papers, and to beg you will show them to such of your friends as you may think are corrupted by political bigotry, or cramped by the influence of slavery or oppression. *(Burn this.)* I have been obliged, by numberless applications, to establish a general rule that no stranger should come in upon us on Christmas-day to give Mass in the Parish. I assure you they keep very clear of us at all other times, and would be very backward in giving the least assistance in the administration of a Parish.

Mr. M'Dermott, to suit your convenience will, if you please, give your family prayers on Christmas-day about 10 o'clock. This mass will serve for the people of Anagh, Cloonroughan, Cloonavindin, &c. Please let me know per bearer your sentiments on this head.

As I am to have a mass at convenience in future, Mr. M'Dermott or I will occasionally give you mass on Sundays and Holidays in future, according as may suit your convenience. I hope you need not be told there is no one more anxious to serve you in all such particulars than your affectionate kinsman. (*b*)

CH. O'CONOR.

To Denis O'Conor, Esq., Willsbrook.

Inscription on the Tomb of the Fallons, of Ballina House, in Dysart Churchyard.

This monument was *first* erected by William Fallon for his wife, Anne Egan, his father, Redmond, and his mother, Margt. O'Connor, Feb. 20, 1720.

(*b*) Charles O'Conor was P. P. of Kilkeevin Parish, and Mr. M'Dermott was his curate. Both Cloonalis and Willsbrook are in the Parish of Kilkeevin, and immediately near each other, which accounts for the close and intimate acquaintance that so long existed between both families, who were so nearly related.

Inscription on the Vault of the Corrasduna family at Ballintobber, County Roscommon.

Pray for the souls of Owen O'Connor, Esq., and his Wife, Catherine O'Connor, alias M'Dermot, and children, who caused this monument to be erected for themselves and their posterity.—June 20, 1762.

Inscription on the Vault of the Willsbrook family at Ballintobber, County Roscommon.

Pray for the souls of Denis O'Connor, of Willsbrook. Esq., and Sarah O'Connor, alias Irwin, his beloved wife, who caused this monument to be erected for themselves and their posterity, in the year 1799.

Inscription on a tombstone found at Castleruby, and now at Tomona, Co. Roscommon, the seat of the late Peter O'Connor, Esq.

Pray for the souls of Roger O'Connor, of the ancient family of Castleruby, Esq., and Anne O'Connor, alias Crofton, of Mote, his wife, and for the souls of such of their ancestors and posterity as dyed or will dye in a redeemable state. This monument was erected by the order of Michael O'Connor, Esq., remainder man of said family, and his wife, Bridget O'Connor, alias Farrell, of the family of Ardanra, the 2nd day of May, 1755.

Inscription on a tombstone in Kilkeevin Churchyard.

Here lies the remains of the descendants of the antient Monarks of Ireland. General Daniel O'Connor Don, and Anne O'Connor, alias Birmingham, his wife, sister to Lord Baron Athenry. Colonel Andrew O'Connor Don, and Honoria O'Connor, alias Dowell, his wife, daughter to Colonel Luke Dowell, of Mantagh. Daniel O'Connor Don, and Margaret O'Connor, alias Ryan, his wife. Sir Thomas

O'Connor, Knight of St. Louis, and General in his Christian Majesty's service. The Revd. Andrew O'Connor—Sir Hugh O'Connor, Knight of Calatrava, Brigadier-General in his Catholic Majesty's Service, and Governor of Chili. Thomas O'Connor and Jane Eccles, alias O'Connor.

This tombstone is a pretty extensive record of how the Cloonalis family spelt their names; the male line of Roderic O'Connor, king of Ireland, became extinct many centuries ago—the present O'Connors are descended from his uncle.

It appears that both O'Connor Roe and O'Connor Dhunne, signed their indenture of composition with Sir John Perrott, on the 3rd day of October, 1585.—O'Connor Roe, Hu. O'Connor.—*Hardiman's West Connaught*, p. 358.

Also, that O'Connor Sligo, signed his indenture of composition with Sir John Perrot on the 23rd September, 1585.—Sir Donel O'Connor Sligoe.—*Ibid*, p. 346.

There is no instance, either on record or in any history published previously to 1753, in which the name has been spelt *O'Conor*, nor a shadow of authority for the very unprincipled use made of the alteration, which was a disgraceful imposture.

Now, it appears beyond all question, from the foregoing inscriptions and records, that the ancient name of the family was *O'Connor*, and yet, in a pedigree published in the late edition of the "*Landed Gentry*," the name *O'Conor* is erroneously given as the family name. Mr. Connellan, in his edition of the *Annals of Ireland*, published in 1846, being deceived by similar misrepresentations, and the adoption of the modern appellation of "O'Conor Don," also adopted the new spelling throughout his valuable work, and he tells us, that the descendants of *Tirlock Don* (or the brown haired) called themselves "O'Conors Don; and the descendants of *Tirlock Roe* (or the red haired,) called themselves "O'Conors Roe"—and that another branch of the family got great possessions in the county of Sligo, and were styled "O'Conors Sligo." All those branches were descended from the same *stock*, and their names are spelled alike on their sepulchral monuments, and in their wills, deeds, and public acts,

and in all the histories of their times, and there was not a single "O'Conor" amongst them.

With respect to the modern appellation of "O'Conor Don," (or the brown-haired O'Connor), Mr. Connellan, Dr. O'Conor, and his brother, Mr. Mathew O'Conor, give us the same account of its true origin, about which there can be no mistake.—(*See page* 130, *note* [c].) While Mr. A. O'Conor very rashly takes it upon himself to contradict them all, and inconsiderately attempts to set it up as a heritable Brehon dignity, descendable only to heirs male, by the (extinct) Brehon law!—a law which never acknowledged *any* descendable dignity, not even in the kings of Ireland, and had no law of descent, even for landed property. What could he be thinking about when he made such a blunder? But the erudite compiler of the above-mentioned pedigree, (in which he states that the appellation of O'Conor Don proceeded from Tirlock Don O'Connor), tells us that "other statements carry up the period of the adoption of the style of Don to the time of the Milesian invasion, under Prince Don, the son of Milesius."—Now, there never was an invasion of Ireland under Prince Don, the son of Milesius? Donn, the son of Milesius, by his first wife, daughter of the King of Scythia, was drowned, left no descendant, and never landed in Ireland!—nor could the title have any connexion with the Spanish title *Don*, which is from *Dominus*, and was not introduced by the Romans into Spain for centuries after the invasion of Ireland by the Milesians. This is a rich sample of affected ambiguity. The anonymous annotator might as well have claimed the honour as flowing from the River Don, (the Tanais of the ancients), which, after a course of 1,100 miles, empties itself by *three* branches into the sea of Azoph, and he might add, that the *three* branches were typical of the *three* branches of the O'Connor family which assumed the modern title "O'Conor Don."

We should raise no objection to the name any gentleman might choose (as Mr. Connellan expresses it) to call himself, nor should we think of impeaching the title of Don, had it not been used as part of the machinery employed to set up the Belanagare family "as the only remains of the O'Connors of Ballintobber," or the new spelling of the name, but that it was put forward to sever the numerous descendants of a respectable family from their ancestors. There was no possibility of defeating the treacherous

manœuvre without adopting the new name, but by impeaching the new spelling, and the shadowy and fictitious title of "O'Conor Don," and stripping them of the significance ascribed to them. Not wishing to interfere with our quondam friends, we simply adopted the new spelling. They had not the sense to leave it so, and have themselves to blame for the consequence of their aggressive arrogance.